

01 22 2019 Work Session 12 30 PM

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Item 1

1. [12:30 PM - 12:50 PM Educational Specifications for High School](#)

Attachment: [Generic High School Educational Specification Polk 2500 \(002\).pdf](#)

#### Minutes:

Angela Usher, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Operations, and Mike Perrone, CFO, provide information on the proposed new high school to be located in the Northeast area of the county. To accommodate the fast growing enrollment numbers in that area, the capacity was increased from 1800 to 2500 students and 109 teaching stations. Phase 1 should begin in August, 2019 and the school should open by June, 2021 at a cost of \$80 million.

Mrs. Miller asked what was used to project enrollment. Mrs. Usher stated trending information from subdivisions and local government was gathered. Mrs. Byrd stated that there is space to add if the need arises.

Ms. Fortney asked if the athletic amenities will include football/track/bleachers, etc. Mrs. Usher responded the \$80 million project will include everything.

Mr. Wilson asked, given the financial constraints of the district, can the school have access to another school's athletic amenities. Mrs. Usher said that hadn't been discussed and this plan will maintain equity across the district.

Mr. Townsend asked if this is to be the east area's answer to Harrison. Mrs. Byrd responded we are duplicating the programs but the schools will not be in competition against each other. Mr. Townsend asked if a geographical aspect will be considered; will Lakeland students who didn't get into Harrison be able to take seats at the new school. Superintendent Byrd reported that many of the East area students do not apply for Harrison because of the ride. This will allow them equal access to the arts program. Mr.

Townsend suggested the enrollment pattern be monitored to see if Lakeland students who are not accepted by Harrison apply for Davenport. He suggested that teachers be allowed input in the design before construction begins and the district should be prepared for the impact the new magnet school will have on nearby schools' enrollment.

Mrs. Byrd responded that these concerns will be addressed during the different phases but today's presentation was to provide the Board an idea of the school design.

Ms. Reynolds asked if it will be an audition-based program? Mrs. Byrd will get clarification for the Board. Dr. Akes stated the current plan is for a comprehensive high school with a full compliment of CT and Arts programs. The decision of whether it is a traditional high school or an academy is at least a year out. Right now the urgency is to have 2500 student stations.

## Item 2

### 2. [12:50 PM - 1:10 PM Resolution 2018/2019-12: Possible Capital Expenditures Reimbursement](#)

Attachment: [Exhibit A.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Reimbursement Resolution - Polk County School Board \(Sales Tax\).pdf](#)

Minutes:

Mike Perrone, CFO, presented information on a possible bond option to cover the construction expenses for the new high school (Resolution 2018-2019/12). There is a window of 90 days to submit.

Mr. Wilson asked if this could be covered with Impact fees or sales tax dollars. Mr. Perrone confirmed that is possible. Mr. Bridges stated this doesn't obligate anyone to bond anything but you can't bond anything without it.

Mrs. Miller confirmed that this is what we could do but a final approval will be requested later. Mr. Perrone stated this is an option; it gives you more flexibility.

Mr. Wilson clarified that the Resolution is on tonight's agenda.

## Item 3

### 3. [1:10 PM - 1:30 PM 2017-2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Audit](#)

Attachment: [2018 CAFR.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Dave Denbow, Director of Accounting, and Mark Arroyo, State Auditor General Supervisor, provided the 2017-2018 Financial Audit. There were no weaknesses or deficiencies found and unmodified or clean opinions were issued on each of the district's major funds.

Item 4

4. [1:30 PM - 1:45 PM Hurricane Education Recovery Assistance for Homeless Children and Youth \("AHCY"\) \\$133,624.00](#)

Attachment: [Grant Application and Budget Impact form.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Maria Longa, Senior Director of Federal Programs, and Dee Dee Wright, Senior Coordinator of Homeless Programs spoke on the Recovery Assistance grant. These funds were made available for students that have experienced homelessness due to a hurricane: 1100 students were identified as children that were effected by the hurricane last year. The funds will help provide extra academic support and transportation which are two of the greatest issues for the homeless. We also included funding for medical and dental issues to help these students.

Many students affected by Hurricane Maria that came to us from Puerto Rico have moved to other districts or have gone back.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Item 5

5. [Quarterly Report - Recommendations approved by the Superintendent](#)

Attachment: [Quarterly Report 10-1-2018 12-31-2018.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Mrs. Miller would like a summary on these expenses so she provide an explanation when questioned by someone on how the money is being spent. Mrs. Byrd confirmed that would be possible.

Item 6

6. [Financial Statements for the period ending November 30, 2018.](#)

Attachment: [November 2018 Board Financial Packet.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Mr. Wilson commented he is concerned about our low fund balance and how it will affect our credit rating and interest rates. It is lower than he had

expected. Mike Perrone, CFO, responded it is definitely taken into consideration when they look at fund balances.

Item 7

7. [Dart Foundation Grant \\$5,000 George Jenkins Senior High](#)

Attachment: [DART Foundation Budget-Impact-Analysis-18-19 George Jenkins.pdf](#)

Attachment: [DART Foundation Board Summary 18-19 George Jenkins.pdf](#)

BOARD AGENDA REVIEW

8. [1:45 PM - 2:00 PM Review January 26, 2019 School Board Agenda](#)

Attachment: [01 22 2018 School Board Agenda.pdf](#)

Minutes:

9. ~~2:00 PM – 2:30 PM EXECUTIVE SESSION~~

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

10. [FSBA Master Board Program](#)

Attachment: [Master Board Program.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Mrs. Fields stated she would like for the Board to take the Master Board training as they had in past years.

Mr. Townsend believes this is a good idea especially if it includes the Superintendent.

Mrs. Fields explained that it is 4-8 hours of multiple group training over several months to accommodate schedules.

11. [Advisory Board: Students and Teachers](#)

Minutes:

Ms. Fortney would like to establish an advisory committee where teachers and students could bring forward and capitalize on it. Mr. Wilson stated that he has heard criticism that students are not involved like they should be. He feels that this is a good

idea.

Ms. Reynolds asked if there is anything similar to this committee. Mrs. Byrd responded she has the Bridge Program with students and the District Advisory Committee (DAC) which includes teachers, parents, and students. Is this a committee for the Board to establish?

Mr. Townsend believes, to have sustainability and structure, this could be a regularly scheduled business-type meeting with 70+ members that meet with senior-leveled administrators (Mr. Hill or Mrs. Porteous).

Mrs. Miller believes it would give more legitimacy to have it under the Board. She suggested doing it separately to get it established then, after a year or so, have it be under the Board.

Mrs. Byrd suggested it be established under the Board so that each Board Member would nominate someone to represent their area.

Mrs. Fields asked what would be the main goal/purpose of the council? Ms. Fortney said they would assist the Board in decision making that affects our students and employees. Such as text book adoption committees, school designs, FOCUS, hard corners, etc.

Mrs. Byrd reported Jeanette Crowley heads up the the District's Advisory Council. Between the two committees, all seven (7) areas are represented. She could have students sit in on the District Advisory Council meetings. She believes they meet monthly.

Ms. Miller suggested it be a subcommittee of the DAC; the areas Ms. Fortney just provided would not have been addressed by the DAC. Mrs. Byrd clarified there is certain information that is not shared due to security issues.

Mr. Hill stated that it would be advantageous to utilize certain committees to do sub committee work and brought back up the chain of command all the way back to Superintendent and the Board.

School Board Attorney Wes Bridges stated that if it is a committee reporting to the School Board, the Board should consider three things:

- tailor it's scope (not such a broad mandate)
- make sure it doesn't become a bargaining table - that belongs to the Unions
- committees that report to school board directly have to be clearly defined. If they do anything other than fact finding, they have to be noticed as a public meeting, there has to be an agenda and minutes and work within the Sunshine laws.

Mr. Townsend asked if each board member could create their own advisory committee that reports to them, individually. Mr. Bridges responded that a board member could meet with anyone at anytime but stated that other school board members cannot attend or you will be in violation of the Sunshine laws.

Mrs. Byrd voiced a concern that there may be an issue if the topics being discussed interfere with the bargaining agreements.

Mrs. Fields suggested that Ms. Fortney and Superintendent Byrd meet to see if an advisory subcommittee is possible. She also suggested board members host town hall meetings to hear the needs of the parents, students, and staff.

Mrs. Byrd confirmed that staff do present to the District Advisory Committee.

Mr. Bridges added that this could be a topic to discuss with FSBA (Florida School Boards Association).

## 12. [Leadership Polk Initiative](#)

Attachment: [CFSBC Leadership Orange Oct 8 2018.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Ms. Reynolds reported that information on Leadership Orange was recently presented at a Central Florida Public School Boards Coalition meeting. This leadership education program (similar to Leadership Polk, Leadership Lakeland, and Leadership Winter Haven) is run by the school district and is a year of school district information. Leadership Orange is for Orange County residents only and school district employees cannot apply. Last year they had over 600 applicants for the 35 seats available. The purpose is to educate the public on the workings of the school district: how different funds can/cannot be used, policies, transportation, facilities, calendar, etc.

Mr. Townsend commented that Leadership Lakeland is a full time job for one person; how would it work here? Ms. Reynolds stated in Orange County the cost is \$250 per person or a scholarship rate of \$50. It's held one day a month for 7 - 10 hours.

Mrs. Miller asked for a presentation to learn more. Mr. Wilson suggested partnering with Polk Vision. They would manage the process; we would manage the day of learning.

Rachel Pleasant, Senior Director of Public Relations, stated it will take a lot of staff's time. Superintendent Byrd stated it is a good way to get news out, but it will take a lot of planning time to set up. She would like to learn how Orange County works with the scholarship.

Mrs. Fields commented that Polk Vision has limited staff as well and is running several different programs. The work load for staff is one concern for her.

Mr. Townsend commented a parttime person would be ideal, if it is self-sustaining.

Mrs. Byrd will contact Orange County's superintendent for more information.

## 13. [School Board Round Table Discussions](#)

Minutes:

Mr. Wilson commented on their first Round Table meeting and asked how the Board would like to move forward. How do we want to manage the public input part of the meeting?

Mrs. Miller thought the meeting was very productive and was surprised at the number of staff that attended. She suggested the meetings begin earlier (around 4 PM) with public comments allowed at the end of the meeting (after 5:30 PM).

One thing Mr. Townsend would like to preserve down the line is for individual School Board members to set a specific topic. He likes to think of these as more enrichment discussions. This would allow the Board to invite experts from outside to provide input.

Mrs. Miller would like the meeting to be videoed.

Mrs. Fields stated the audio worked well for her. When the Board first discussed how the meeting was to flow, she questioned if there would ever be discussions about policy making. She feels that a couple of the conversations were very closet. She reminded the Board the initial goal for the round table meetings was to allow board members an opportunity to get to know one another and have general discussions. So everybody could get to know one another in a comfortable environment; that was what was stated. We need to shy away from any discussion at a Round Table meeting that is going to be coming to the Board for a decision unless we are going to say that policy could be a part of the discussion. That will allow those that had not planned to attend to be aware of the policy discussion and attend, if possible.

Mr. Townsend commented that 2 or 3 things came out of the meeting as agenda items. He believes it is inevitable. The whole point of this is to talk about things that lead to policy. Our job as a Board is to make good policy. Information gathering and talking through things are going to lead to policy. He remembered it being said that there would be no votes, not even unofficial votes. Just talking through things; what our positions are individually; things we might want to have as agendas; philosophical things. All of those may flow into policy eventually. He feels the subject matter of the meeting was precisely what he imagined it to be.

Mr. Wilson doesn't believe policy discussions can be avoided. There will be some that we will ask for consensus and will bring to a regular work session. Mrs. Fields responded that is the purpose of discussions during work sessions.

Mr. Wilson will have to discuss with Superintendent Byrd the availability of having staff work late to video the meetings. Ms. Miller did not want to delay scheduling the next meeting just because of her wish to have it videoed. What she understood the purpose of the meeting was to allow time to expand conversations.

Mr. Wilson asked how important is the public input. If it is just the Board, we can hold it after the regular work session and there would be no time constraint.

Mr. Townsend believes the public decided it was pretty important.

Mr. Wilson requested direction on how to comply with the 3 minute policy. Mr. Bridges stated that it was expressed up front that this was not intended to be a regular meeting of

the school board. There is some flexibility allowed when you create something new like this. He clarified that there is nothing you can do at one of these meetings that you cannot do during your Board Comments during the work session.

Mrs. Miller believes that public comment was not a part of the original idea; it was just going to be an expansion. You could announce that the public has access to the meetings; if you have comments you are allowed 3 minutes at the Board Meeting. She is not opposed to public comments but it may not work in this setting.

The next Round Table meeting will be scheduled for February but it is unsure how the public comment will be addressed at this time.

#### 14. [School Board Comments](#)

Minutes:

Mr. Townsend cannot support the transportation plan. He's not clear if this is something the Board is allowed to vote on. He doesn't think it solves the funding problem. It looks more like we're trying to get out of the business of transporting people that carry liability.

He agrees with Mrs. Fields that the Board needs the Master Board training. We need to know what we're to vote on, what are we not going to vote on, what is staff able to just do versus not do. He wants to be able to vote on the agenda for the Strategic Plan meeting. He wants to look at the agenda plan meeting. He wants a review of what the goals are; what is a goal; what's a priority. He wants to vote on the plan when we are done. He will not vote in favor of the plan if it doesn't have a priority for the work environment; if it doesn't have a priority for program implementation; and if it doesn't have a priority for openness and transparency. It is his assumption that we are doing things every day to make the work environment better. He is not looking to create anything new, he is looking to get documentation on what's been done about certain priorities. He feels like there is no accountability or program implementation at the management level. He offered as examples: BoardDocs and Focus. Prior to the meeting in March, he wants a chance to vote on the agenda and again after the plan is formed.

Mrs. Fields commented the agenda is typically created by the Chair and the facilitator. It is then given to the Board to review to see if anything needs to be removed or added.

Mr. Wilson stated it is important to have feedback from staff as it relates to the previous goals, where we are and how we got there. He has asked Dr. Freijo that this be kept to an hour and half. There would be a progress report by the Superintendent. The rest of the meeting would be discussion on strategic planning, our goals, and how we want to move forward.

As to the transportation concern, Mr. Wilson stated he understood we have a shortage of bus drivers and as a result the students are not getting to school on time. They are being picked up early in the morning arriving home late in the evenings.

Mrs. Byrd concurred. In talking with bus drivers and other transportation staff, discipline



and getting students to school on time is a struggle for them. Teachers also spoke out on the late arrival of their students and how it effects their instructional time of the whole classroom.

Mrs. Miller stated the Board is the communication piece to the community. They need information up front. She requested that if there is a presentation on cuts or things that will affect the community, the information needs to be provided to the Board when you present. She needs information that shows if we cut these routes, it will gain us this many minutes.

Mrs. Fields believes a discussion needs to be held with the charter schools. We need an expert in bus transportation. Utilizing a Citrus Connection bus is not the same as using a school bus. They are not designed the transport students which creates a liability issue. Are we the only school district transporting charter school students? She is concerned with the special needs students attending the smaller charters who do not have the ability to provide transportation. Will those students return to the district and are we able to provide them the same level of services?

Ms. Fortney reported that she has talked with several charter directors and they are having a hard time connecting to a person in transportation. They are asking for a year delay to allow for them to plan better.

Rob Davis informed the Board that the District is not required to transport charter students. It is one piece of the puzzle. We are looking at the entire transportation operation as a whole. This is a repeat of what occurred a few years back when we were in the same situation and could not get students to school on time. At that time the McKeel Academies, the Lake Wales Charter System, and Compass Charter began transporting their own students.

The under 2 mile transportation is another important part of the puzzle. We are not required to provide this service. We are also looking at the distance between stops. We are working with Citrus Connection to see if they can assist us. This is not just cutting charter school transportation. We are looking at a holistic approach to provide better transportation for our students. We provided letters that included our contact information. We are trying to form a committee to work with the charters. Liability is not a part of this decision. The fact is the students that we are required to transport are not getting to school on time or home at a decent time.

Mr. Townsend feels that discussion needs to take place with each individual school.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Board gave consensus to move forward eliminating charter school transportation. Mr. Townsend stated he was rescinding his consensus.

Mrs. Miller commented that her decision was based on verbal statements, not written. She requested information on the number of students that are arriving late to school. How often? And, how eliminating charter transportation will resolve it.

Ms. Reynolds stated that we live in a very different age than 10 years ago. Everything is online and is known before the paper comes out. The complaints she is hearing that the certified letters weren't received until 4 - 5 days after the learning about it on line. She

suggested in the future, we send an email to those involved as well as the certified letter.

Mr. Bridges commented that it does not appear to him that anything untoward has happened when you look at the charter transportation contracts. If it is possible for the district to provide transportation, the district can offer it; if it's not available, we're not required to. The termination notice was handled appropriately. He doesn't believe previous Boards have been asked for consensus about things like this. Termination language is already in the contract and it is designed to be discretionary with the department.

Mr. Davis stated his intent was to notify the Board of their intent first before contacting the charters. Letters were sent out the days following the work session.

Mrs. Fields believes more discussion is needed to see how the students at Achievement Academy will be affected. If they are not able to provide the transportation, where will the students go? She asked if we are going to let them know how to get the equipment and tools needed to transport the students? Mr. Davis responded we are doing our very best to help them through this process and it was said in the letter as well. John Hill, Deputy Superintendent, commented it was also expressed at the last work session.

Mrs. Fields asked if meetings have been scheduled with the charters. Mr. Davis informed the Board he is scheduling the meetings but first he met with Tom Phillips and Polk Transit Authority to ask they attend to offer assistance, if possible.

Superintendent Byrd clarified that Mr. Davis was and is doing everything possible to ensure our students get to school on time and safely. He is informing the ESE charters that we have lift buses available for the special needs students. He has made himself and his team very available to them.

Mr. Townsend feels like is an organizational issue. He asked for a one pager that would help him make the case for the district in the public and has not received it.

Mrs. Miller asked for information on how removing Victory Ridge charter students from Roosevelt Academy's route will get the students to school any faster. How will charter students who are sharing a Frostproof bus delay those students from getting to school on time.

Mr. Wilson reminded the Board that personnel matters fall under the auspices of the superintendent in the State of Florida and do not necessarily have to come before the Board. He agrees with Mr. Townsend that it would have been helpful if a meeting had been held with the charters first.

Mrs. Byrd clarified that the plan was brought to the Board first because if it had been discussed with the charters first; they would have been contacting you about something you were unaware of.

Mr. Townsend asked how this is a personnel issue? Mr. Wilson responded that bus drivers are the personnel involved. Mr. Davis said if we had all bus driver positions filled as well as a sub pool, this would not be an issue.

Mrs. Miller asked for clarification; is it the routes or the lack of drivers causing the issue?

Mr. Wilson explained that the routes we run are too complex and too lengthy; we cannot get the students to school on time. If we had more bus drivers, we could add more routes.

Mrs. Fields commented the Board needs to believe that the Superintendent and her staff are working to do what needs to be done to get students where they need to be.

In the future, Mr. Townsend prefers Mrs. Byrd to speak to the stakeholders before providing the Board the information.

Mrs. Miller stated, not knowing when the Master Board training will be held, she needs a procedure or policy on how board member emails are addressed and the response time. She is tired of waiting weeks on end for an answer. Perhaps at the training we can find out how other districts handle board member requests. Mrs. Fields suggested Mrs. Miller meet with the Superintendent to discuss her concerns.

Mrs. Miller voiced appreciation of Mr. Hill and Dr. Akers for attending the Polk ESE Advisory Committee meeting. Rather than this just a meeting of interested community people, she would like this committee to be under the School Board, similar to the Audit Committee.

Mr. Wilson responded there is an Advisory Committee in place. Mrs. Miller stated it is in a transformation stage. Mr. Wilson asked the Board's Executive Assistant, Susan Worthington to place it on a work session agenda.

Ms. Fortney asked again for a social worker and mental health professional at every school. She asked Mr. Hill for an update. Mr. Hill replied he has been reviewing all the suggestions and the previous information provided by Marianne. There may be some items that can be addressed quickly but there are some complexities and systematic pieces. We need to make sure the systematic changes are sustainable. He has requested a meeting with Marianne on the 28th.

Mr. Wilson said that it would be helpful when staff brings topics to the Board, especially things that have far reaching impact, that they be given the information needed to address questions.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM. Minutes were approved and attested this 26th day of February, 2019.

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Lynn Wilson, Board Chair

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Jacqueline M. Byrd, Superintendent