

02 09 2016 Work Session 9 00 AM

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## A. New Business

### 1. [9:00-10:45 AM School Board Comments](#)

#### Minutes:

Statement from Mrs. Fields:

We're here this morning to allow the Board Members to share their thoughts and concerns concerning the results of the investigation that was presented to us a couple of months ago and the results of the investigation was given to us a week ago. We have not had any opportunity to have any discussions. So this today is a discussion we are not going to be taking any action because we have not notified the public that we would do so. So this a not a School Board Meeting. Today at the end of the period that we have the discussion we hope to be able to come to a conclusion that we will either have a special call Board meeting to address any action that might need to be taken over the next few days. We will wait until our School Board Meeting on February 23 to take action if that be the desire of the Board. I want everyone to understand we are not taking any action, just sharing thoughts and I know and I believe in all my heart we will be professional and we will be kind and we will be caring and loving toward one another. I know that without even having to request that and so with that said, I have a couple of statements that I would like to make as we get started and then when I finish I want to allow Mr. Bridges, our School Board Attorney, to set the stage for us this morning: history on the rules of the law, the background on the investigation, where we find ourselves today, and again our course of action.

We will allow Mrs. LeRoy, she's requested to have a few minutes to make comments. The School Board members will have an opportunity to do the same. I want to make it known that Mrs. Sellers is sick this morning and not able to be here this morning. The School Board is accountable to the citizens, parents, students, taxpayers and the rules of law. The School Board is responsible for balancing the concerns of the citizen, accountability of the entire school district team, transparency of its work and dealings, honoring the oath of office that each individually swore, are affirmed to uphold the US Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Florida. The School Board is subject to the rule of law. The School Board is a political

subdivision of the State of Florida. The School Board responsible under the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment to the US Constitution to provide for equal protection under the law and to provide for due process. To ignore these great responsibilities and our oath of office is risk exposing the school district and the citizens to unnecessary legal exposure. Thoughtful, judicious, and lawful deliberations will best serve the district, its employees, and the people we serve and represent and as we get ready to have discussion I hope that we will all keep that in mind. I want Mr. Bridges to define for us the rule of law.

Statement from Wes Bridges, Counsel for the Board:

I am sorry that we're here this morning to have this conversation. I've been in the business for 18 years and this is the first time that I have had occasion to participate in conversations such as this. The stakes are very high today and it is critical that at all points we don't make procedural errors. As you know, the district received a complaint from Greg Rivers on October 26 late in the day. It was brought under the Whistleblower Statute which is a Florida law that has its own requirements for how it should be treated. Under School Board policy when a whistleblower complaint comes in it must be investigated. For most employees the investigation would be conducted by District personnel, however, under School Board policy if a complaint comes in against a School Board Member or against the Superintendent it is delivered directly to the School Board Attorney and the School Board Attorney has the express authority to retain outside counsel to perform any investigation. This complaint came to me and I immediately transmitted it to the attorneys of Sniffen and Spellman in Tallahassee. Rob Sniffen is well known in the state for this sort of work. It is not a firm that has ever represented the Superintendent or the School Board. It is not a firm that has ties political or otherwise to Polk County and it was and is my opinion that they were well suited in terms of their experience and reputation as well as their specialization in their demonstrated impartiality to investigate this matter. The rates they charge have been widely misreported. The rates in the agreement that was made available to the press \$275 for the senior lawyers, \$200 per hour for junior attorney. These are discounted rates, their normal rates for the senior attorneys are \$350 and the normal rate for junior associate was \$275. By law the complaint and all related materials are confidential until the investigation is complete. That part we have made clear at all points and I believe that our friends of the Fourth Estate have understood that and have behaved accordingly. When the investigative report was received, it came in on January 20<sup>th</sup>, it was served on the Superintendent as required by law and 10 days thereafter it became a matter of public record. There were nine counts: one of sexual harassment and hostile work environment, and the others having to do with various alleged improprieties in hiring and procurement. The nine complaints were unsubstantiated but there remain concerns about the findings that were made and the testimony that was contained in the investigation. We are in a School Board Work Session setting today and they are noticed for the purpose of advertising potential action by the School Board. My advice to you is that if you wish to take action the best approach will be to call a special meeting for that purpose so that it can be noticed so that anyone who wishes to have comment can do so, so that anyone who wishes to attend and participate and so the press will be advised that will be the purpose of the meeting. Such a meeting will be called on 48 hours' notice. There is such a thing as an emergency School Board Meeting and it can be called sooner. Those are generally for health and safety reasons. A special meeting can be called under Florida's law, it needs to be held at least 48 hours after the publication of the Agenda. So if you wish to do that my suggestion to you would be to do it no earlier than Friday, so that we can allow for adequate notice to go so that anyone who wants to participate can. There is no provision in law for the School

Board to meet outside of the Sunshine to discuss this. Any conversations that you wish to have must be had in a public meeting. It is appropriate today for you to have conversation. It has to be addressed and I think the School Board Members all have expressed that they wish to do so today. But once again if you wish to take any action you will need to do so at another meeting that has been noticed for that purpose. The Superintendent has a contract with the School Board. It runs through the fiscal year 2016-2017. There are two provisions in it that have to do with early termination, one is termination for cause and one is termination without cause. Termination with cause you would have to articulate the reason why you are terminating the Superintendent. I would advise you here that since none of the findings in the complaint were substantiated the complaint itself and the findings would not comprise cause. It may be there is cause to be found in the underlying testimony and the underlying facts. If you chose to go that direction the Superintendent would be entitled to due process. That means she would be entitled to an administrative hearing and it would be essentially a trial. Both sides would have the opportunity to introduce such evidence as they chose, to put on witnesses that would be subject to examination and cross examination. It would be a much more thorough and lengthy and rigorous investigative process than what has happened thus far. The whistleblower investigative process involves interviewing witnesses who are allowed to testify under oath but they are not required to. There is no provision for cross examination and the investigator investigates based on the information that is available. In an administrative hearing, the evidentiary rules would apply and the Superintendent would have a right to confront her accuser. Each side would have the opportunity to present witnesses who would be subject to examination and cross examination. As you can imagine in a case like this, that would likely be a rather lengthy process. There is also a provision in her contract for termination without cause. If you elect to go that direction you should not articulate any reason whatsoever. You should simply say that is what you wish to do and you have the opportunity to do that and that is a contractual matter that would not be a hearing and the Superintendent would be entitled to severance pay in the amount of 20-weeks' salary. The third option you have is not to take any action and that is a fair subject for conversation. If you believe that under the circumstances that this is something that the District can get past that is absolutely appropriate for you to consider. The investigator did make recommendation for some additional training for senior staff. I would recommend to you that the training takes place and I would recommend that it be provided to you by someone who is recognized as an expert in the industry. We should look to who does training for Publix, Lockheed, Geico, for the county, city, and bring someone in from the outside because I think it would be very difficult for anyone inside the District to provide that training under the circumstances to the senior leadership. Those are your options under the contract and under the law. I will entertain any questions that you have for me and other than that I will turn it back over to the Chair.

Statement from Superintendent LeRoy:

It is an honor to be the Superintendent of the Polk County School District. It took me nearly 30 years to get here. I take the privilege of leading this District with the sincerity that I find difficult to express with words. I am incredibly proud of what this district has accomplished in a few short years and excited for the progress the District stands to achieve in the coming days and months. I understand why many of you are here this morning. I believe the public, as well as my colleagues in the District, and the School Board deserve to hear from me personally on this matter. As such, I am going to address the investigation and its findings for what I hope to be the final

time. First, please allow me to apologize for any failure on my part to ineffectively manage a relationship with a senior staff member. I take responsibility for that and I have learned from it. I understood from the onset that these claims against me were serious and I would be fighting for my professional life. Regardless of the merit, or lack thereof of the claims made. When allegations such as these are made, particularly against someone in the public eye all that one is left to do is to endure the public scrutiny and to be patient, transparent, responsive, and cooperative in the investigation and have faith that the truth will come out. With this in mind, the following is precisely what I did in response to the allegations. I hired and paid for my own counsel, prepared a detailed written response to each of the claims raised, and provided document after document refuting the position of the complainant. I turned over everything the Investigator requested including my phone, phone records, emails and other documents. I did it quickly and in many cases even before the Investigator asked. I also, voluntarily sat for the better part of a morning, with the Investigator answering under oath every question posed to me. I was not evasive whatsoever. I was forthcoming about all that I could possibly be forthcoming about. To the extent any redactions were made to records I provided to the Investigator it was done to protect personal, family, and health information, having absolutely nothing to do with the allegations raised. Lastly, I did not in any way whatsoever attempt to influence or impede the integrity of the investigation. In the end, as many of you know by now, not a single of the nine claims asserted by the complainant were substantiated. Not because of a legal technicality or the Investigator failed somehow to do his job, but because after an exhaustive investigation by an independent third party that occurred over a period of months including several witness interviews, dozens of phone calls, and review of thousands of pages documents, it was determined that I had not done what the complainant accused me of or violated any law, rule, or regulation. Anyone can say what he or she wishes to say, however, that does not make it true. I would ask that if you choose to judge me, you judge me not on rumor, not on allegations or claims which were flatly denied or witness testimony which is unreliable. Not on media reports, blogs, or attacks aimed at readership or ratings but on the results of the investigation, my record of achievement in this District, and over the course of 30 years in public education, and an unflappable dedication to this School District's student, staff, and mission. I believe that after 30 years in public education and never before having been the subject of any allegations I think I am deserving of at least that. While I have without question learned from this investigation and I respect the process and I am humbled by having been forced to go through it I am ready to put this behind me and I am ready to move forward. I remain wholly dedicated to the students and staff of this District and to the goals and expectations of the School Board and this community. I hope you all will agree to support me in these ongoing endeavors. Thank you everyone.

Statement from Mr. Harris:

It is really a sad situation that we have arrived at this circumstance in our District. One of the things I hear our Attorney speak about frequently is the "Fourth Estate" or issues dealing with the press or media. I think the record that we have received in regards to the investigation has received a lot of commentary and the forth of State both traditional and the social media that we now see so much of, there is a long history that is sad when we crucify and we trial and judge someone in the public eye without going through a court of law. And what we have seen and what we have heard is like Paul Harvey use to say--maybe it's not the rest of the story. Having said that I think we need to step back as a community and take a deep breath and understand that there is a trust factor in every position especially in a leadership

position. There is an expectation that you will set an example but also I think the public has a duty to make sure we don't crucify someone without their having the opportunity to put forth "their side of the story." Whatever is the final outcome today or in a subsequent meeting I think we as a community need to pull together for the benefit of the students in Polk County because we've made some remarkable achievements over the last 2 ½ years academically. Let's not forget that. Let's remember that we have improved dramatically. The State's scores are about to come out hopefully this week that will reaffirm that. We need to make sure that our leadership is in place that will continue that improvement academically. That is all for right now.

Statement from Mr. Wilson:

First let me say this is extremely difficult. I will share with my colleagues on the Board that I slept very little last night. As I share my thoughts and concerns, I do so from three perspectives. From the perspective of a School Board Member who has been attending meetings, work sessions, retreats, Master Board sessions and so forth but also from the perspective of a School Board Member who has listened very carefully to our constituents, to our employees, to our stakeholders in the community so I bring my thoughts and concerns from that perspective, in addition to that from the perspective of an individual who spent much time reading the complaint, the response, the Investigator's report and many countless hours pouring over the supplemental documents that were a part of the report. In finding, I share my concerns from the perspective of an individual who served as an officer with an organization that saw two of its top officials engage in a public airing of their grievances. I know firsthand just how damaging that can be to an organization and how difficult and challenging it can be to repair that damage after the fact. It's my opinion that Mrs. LeRoy's technical skills as it relates to managing the academics of our school district are exemplary. We've seen some tremendous learning gains in education in our school district under Mrs. LeRoy's leadership. Now to be clear those gains are the hardworking efforts of all our employees. The hardworking efforts of our students, parents, our bus drivers, principals, paras, and I can't emphasize this enough, our teachers. Nevertheless, it was Mrs. LeRoy that provided the blueprint and led that charge. On the other hand, Mrs. LeRoy has imposed a leadership style that has not demonstrated that it values inclusiveness. A leadership style that has not demonstrated that it values collaboration and team work. A leadership style that has not demonstrated that it values the contribution of our employees. Recently a report was provided that told us our employees take great pride in working for the Polk County Public School system but that they do not feel their contributions are valued. During the period of time that I have been on the Board I've been extremely impressed with Mrs. LeRoy's technical skills in managing the academics of our School District. I've become increasingly concerned about Mrs. LeRoy's leadership style. After the report came out, I met with Mrs. LeRoy, I shared my concerns that our employees don't feel their contributions are valued. I suggested to the Superintendent that she consider some adjustments to her leadership style and in all fairness, she made an attempt. In my opinion, that attempt was quite tepid. I believe it was tepid because of my opinion. I think that Mrs. LeRoy believes her leadership style is fully appropriate for our School District and is effective and successful. I offer this to my colleagues the greatest technical skills in the world will not carry the day if we have 13,000 disengaged employees. On the other hand, very mediocre skills sets will be fully successful if we have 13,000 fully engaged employees. And I conclude by leaving these final remarks with my colleagues. I am sure that some of you believe that this is an isolated incident. It is my experience

that given Mrs. LeRoy's leadership style this is not an isolated incident. It is my opinion that Mrs. LeRoy's leadership style is not appropriate for the Polk County Public School System and at this time I have lost confidence in Mrs. LeRoy's ability to continue leading in the Polk County Public School System. Madam Chair I respectfully request that we schedule a meeting as soon as possible to conduct a vote of whether or not Mrs. LeRoy should continue as the Superintendent of the Polk County Public School System. Thank you.

Statement from Mr. Mullenax:

This is an issue that I never have had to face before and I don't know of another school board around the state that has. That being said, I want to say one thing up front. I am quoted in the paper accurately by Mr. Chambliss saying that I did have confidence in her but what was not put in the paper was "the rest of the story." When he called at 8 or 8:30 in the morning and I called him back he asked if I had read the entire report and it had just been released the night before. I said no I have not. I have read the complaint, I read the response, and I have read the investigative report, did you read all the testimony. No I have not read it. So my quote at that point was accurate. I did mention in talking to the reporter that I would after I read the whole thing, I didn't read the entire document, it's like 1800 pages and things could change. Well I read it and it placed a lot of seeds in my mind. I read a lot of it twice and some even 3 times. The allegations are from the point of a legal point and are in my opinion and in the opinion of the investigators are just not accurate. As was stated by the legal authorities that were hired to determine for us, to look into it and to investigate it. We have had many accomplishments in the last 2 ½ years with Mrs. LeRoy. You can't dispute that and that's why she was brought here. For the purpose of the press, so that they don't particularly misquote me from this point forward, I'm going to read my statement. Mrs. Clanton will hand it out to the press as I read it. It will be put on Facebook and Twitter, simply because I don't want to be misquoted, misunderstood or something left out about what I said. We hired Kathy LeRoy to bring our student achievement levels up in the District and she has done that. I could make a long list of accomplishments but not now. We did not bring her here for the situation we are now facing. When I was made aware of the complaint being filed I said there would be no winners in this scenario, only losers. We have all lost. I am disappointed by the actions of two intelligent people who should've know better to have participated in the behavior that finds us at this point. We expect the Superintendent and those top staff people to be totally at the highest level of professional ethics. The leaders of ethical behavior. They should be setting an example for all the people in the education community in Polk County but they did not. I have been inundated with contacts from all different segments of the community who think that both should go. The level of respect and trust they had before in their positions has been totally eroded and they will never be able to get it back. Our District deserves better. It will be impossible for the Superintendent to gain the respect needed from all of our stakeholders. It is time for us to go forward from this situation and I am prepared to vote if it becomes a motion at some point. Madam Chair I would like to have a special call meeting as soon as possible.

Statement from Mrs. Cunningham:

This is a very difficult and sad time for our school district. As my colleagues have already mentioned, we spent countless of hours reviewing material and information. I personally have read the entire 1,800 pages of the report and all the testimonies, every text, every email, and read some stuff twice. I understand that after the investigation was completed that the nine allegations were unsubstantiated. But I still had a problem with a lot of the information that was in the testimonies and in the

report. I thought let me go and review our Polk County School District Strategic Plan. I pulled out the Strategic Plan that we publish and looked through it because as folks have said this morning we are doing well in our academic achievement. We are not where we need to be but we are certainly on the right road to success. So I reviewed the mission statement, the vision, and under the vision was a title of core values and some of them are, ethics, integrity, dignity, respect, excellence. It made me wonder. I continued to review the SP and found an area called stakeholder partnerships, at that point I realized we would be inundated with emails and phone calls, but I have also been down this rodeo before and typically those that speak up are those that are probably not going to say something positive in the process. I am a person of fair equity. I need to reach out to the constituents that I serve and get a feeling of what folks are thinking and I did. I contacted principals, administrators, teachers, parents, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, District staff, you name it, I talked to them. Somewhere in the Polk County School District because it was important for me to know how our folks are feeling because that is who I represent. I researched from all the comments I received what are some of the actions that have been taken because people said, if this happened to me, what would you do in my situation? I could not answer that because I did not have the knowledge. I researched it and asked what has happened in the past with our employees? How would a situation such as this have been handled? I received that information. Then I contacted our legal team and asked tell me a little about what's happened in the state of Florida and also in our Nation. Has there been a situation such as this that we can glean some information from? I had to do my due diligence in order to speak before you this morning. I learned there were some certainly in our State and in our Nation but none that have risen to this level. I realized that we this morning or at our upcoming meeting are going to be setting the precedents not only for our District, our State and possibly the USA and I take that very seriously. Our decision will also and most importantly be a reflection to our students and our community of the behaviors that we expect of them and the example we expect them to set. I came to the decision; that our decision in this matter, is going to "reset the moral compass of the Polk County School Board and District employees." We are resetting our moral compass with our actions on this matter. Thus, I believe that our Superintendent can no longer be a highly effective leader as the CEO of the Polk County School District. I would like to respectfully request that our Board Chair call an emergency meeting with due public notice as soon as possible so that we may take action on this matter. This concludes my comments Madam Chair.

Statement from Mr. Berryman:

Some things have already been said that I would say and I don't want to repeat off all of it. The allegations and the report from the investigators more or less speak for themselves. As I already said, if it were some employees being investigated, that would pretty much be the end of it but I think people deserve fairness and always deserve fairness no matter what level. With that said, we as Board members in leadership whether it be the Superintendent or senior staff should be held to a higher standard. I've been upset because no. 1 it's not good for the District, not good for the students, doesn't matter what's good for the seven of us but it's just not good from where we are as a District and where we are headed. As I too compliment the Superintendent and Mr. Rivers and that's why I've been very disappointed. Their operational expertise the past few years has been unbelievable. Mr. Rivers has saved us probably 1 to 2 million dollars a year every year in the restructuring. The Superintendent has led us down the path of improved academic achievement and that's why we are. We are here for the students and the people that lead those students, our teachers and school administrators. We are headed in the right

direction. We've got a positive trend. Mr. Harris referred to the pending scores that are going to come out. If they come out the way the preliminary scores came out we are going to have at least 43 schools that have improved by at least one grade level. We'll probably dropped from 59<sup>th</sup> in the State to 49<sup>th</sup>, that's not far enough but it's quite an improvement. We have fiscally gone from a 3% required fund balance to over double, between 6 and 7%. We've done some things to restructure financially that have benefitted the District and that benefits the classroom. We gave raises two years ago that were probably unprecedented and hopefully we can continue to do that. There has been plenty of good that is going on so it is just a crying shame that all of that positive has to be now destroyed or set aside. No matter what we do right now or at the special Board meeting, whether we maintain a relationship with the Superintendent or not, we have disrupted the positive trend. I blame the unprofessionalism on the two key players here but also on some others. It's not good for the District, not good for our mission, and kind of if you will, shame on us. We need to get back refocused and do what we are here for. In fairness to everybody, the District, and to the Superintendent, I'm glad we heard her today. We do need to fair to everyone but obviously first we do have an obligation to our students. Madam Chair I do request that we have a special Board meeting as soon as possible so that we can again discuss what is the appropriate action. Thank you.

Statement from Mrs. Fields:

I remember a couple years ago we were in a Leadership Lakeland session on education day and one of the participants said do you ever stay up late at night because of a situation that you just worry over. And at the time I said no. Because I never have. I remember Mr. Riley was on the School Board at the time, he's here today and we are happy to see you Mr. Riley, and Mr. Riley said yes. He shared what kept him up at night and I never ever thought I would be at a place where I would be kept up at night. Trying to figure out what is right and what is the best thing to do. Trying to seek a sense of grace and mercy. We all need it. If we were all to open up our book and let someone see inside, we all have dark spots, dark places, even me, so who am I to judge? Looking at this information, the investigation, the findings were not substantiated but there were some concerns. I have some concerns too. Some of those concerns have already been shared by the Board members. I think Mr. Berryman's statement probably ties very close to mine. It's a shame that we sit here today having to even have this discussion. I think that as adults we should be professional at all times. Mr. Harris talked about the story. I think he said whose story is correct. There are three sides to the story. His side, her side, and the truth. Somebody is not telling the truth. We don't know who that somebody is. Both of them are at fault for establishing a relationship that is not professional. There is no if and or buts about it. I believe that the Superintendent used poor judgment when it came to a establishing a relationship beyond business with Mr. Rivers. I have to step back and look at the investigative findings. That's what I thought I was supposed to do. When I stepped back and found that there were no findings that were considered illegal, there were some concerns and I felt that those concerns could be addressed. I believe that there should be some type of discipline for Mrs. LeRoy. I believe that it should be something like a 30-day suspension and that she should be placed on a Professional Development plan addressing some of the concerns that were in the investigation. I believe she should be given an opportunity to gain the trust and respect from the community, the schools, the employees, and from everybody involved. I'm not stupid and I have heard what my peers think but I am just crazy enough to believe that even if I am by myself, it won't be the first time and it won't be the last time either, at the end of the day I got to be able to look myself in the mirror and know that I did what I thought to be the right thing to do. I respect



everybody's opinion and I will arrange for a special call meeting to address the concerns and then the recommendation. We will have to have a form of motion at that meeting and then we will take it from there. Mr. Bridges we need to make sure that we get that done in a very timely fashion. It needs to be on Friday.

Actions to be taken:

Mr. Bridges will arrange with the Community Relations Department for a media release and a public notice will be made for a special board meeting on Friday, February 12, 2016 at 5:00 pm in the School Board Auditorium at the direction of Mrs. Fields. The public will be afforded the opportunity to speak at that meeting.

Mrs. Fields recessed the work session for a 15 minute break and the Board will reconvene in the Large Conference Room.

## B. Board Agenda Review

### C. Information

#### Item 2

##### 2. [Accounts Receivable Settlement](#)

Attachment: [Agreement with KMT-Feb 2016.pdf](#)

#### Item 3

##### 3. [Quarterly Report Bid Recommendations](#)

Attachment: [Quarterly Report-Bid Recommendations Approved by the Superintendent 2015-2016 -2.pdf](#)

#### Item 4

##### 4. [Polk Pre-Collegiate Request for Contract Modification \(15-Yr Contract Term\)](#)

Attachment: [Polk Pre-Collegiate Academy High Performing Letter.pdf](#)

Attachment: [PPCA Letter Requesting a 15 Year Contract.pdf](#)

Attachment: [WS Summary - PPCA 15 Yr Contract Modification 2.9.16.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Mr. Wilson asked if this is a typical action.

Melissa Brady, Director of Charter Schools, explained this is statutorily covered.

Mr. Wilson asked about the corrective action plan that was imposed on the school.

Mrs. Brady explained that the plan was approved at the last School Board Meeting. The corrective action plan and site reviews will be brought back to the Board over the next 5 years. This will ensure they are fulfilling the required adjustments.

Item 5

5. [10:45-11:00 AM BREAK](#)

D. Discussion

Item 6

6. [10:15-11:00 AM LHS](#)

Item 7

7. [11:00-11:20 AM Proposed 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 School Year Calendars](#)

Attachment: [Executive Summary - Calendar - 2-9-16 Work Session - Final.pdf](#)

Attachment: [1-28-16 Calendar Committee Meeting Agenda and Supporting Documents.pdf](#)

Minutes:

2016-2017 School Year Calendar

Brian Warren, Acting Senior Director of Human Resource Services, stated the Calendar Committee came together on January 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss a summary of matters the Board wanted them to review. In regards to the observance of Good Friday preceding Easter, there have been two options suggested.

Option A would be to do staff development through an online Moodle Module which could be accessed through computers and various locations if staff will avail themselves of their religious observance during that time and would not be required to use a personal day.

Option B was a discussion in collaboration with Polk Education Association (PEA) to step outside what is traditionally observed and allow for the use of personal leave for that day if staff members choose to observe the holiday. If they use the personal leave for that day we would waive any requirements to make up that staff development for Good Friday. I will offer that 2016-17 is somewhat of an anomaly because it's hanging out

there in the 16-17 calendar but the 17-18 calendar Good Friday is embedded in Spring Break.

Mrs. Fields asked when Good Friday is in 2017. Mr. Warren stated it is April 14, 2017. Which generated the dialogue with respect on how we would handle staff in situations that may arise in that regard for this proposed 2016-17 calendar.

Mr. Berryman expressed that we should honor Good Friday and it should be a school holiday. Mrs. Cunningham stated people should be allowed to have that day off in preparation for Easter festivities. She commented the School District should continue to observe that holiday, and students and parents should also have that opportunity.

Mrs. Fields asked how much testing would be done on Friday, April 14. Mr. Warren stated it is a makeup day for standardized testing.

Mr. Warren stated there are also two options for multiple start dates for the 16-17 school year. Previously August 15, 2016 was the beginning date and the last day for students was June 1, 2017.

Option A affords a duration of summer of nine weeks and one day, meaning August 15 being the first day of school and June 2 the last day of school. This option provides an additional week of instruction prior to testing which in the arena of high stakes testing and accountability to Florida Standards there was a lot of value placed on that.

Option B affords a duration of summer of ten weeks and one day, meaning August 22 being the first day of school extends the school year to June 9 the last day for school. This option pushes the end of the semester further in the current goal to complete curricular requirements before Winter Break. It's a real priority to keep that completion of the first semester aligned with Winter Break or as close to it as possible. To bring students back and have 3 to 4 days to close out semesters may not be the most beneficial use of instructional time. There is a shortened summer break on Option B.

Mr. Harris asked in regard to summer academies what has historically been our length of time. The Superintendent explained it is typically 6 weeks.

Mr. Harris said the shortened summer break would only allow for 2 weeks available to custodians to perform any large scale preparations and maintenance at those facilities.

Mrs. Fields stated ten weeks out of school is too long for students to not be engaged in learning. She mentioned there is not much difference between nine weeks one day and nine weeks three days, so she will defer to the Committee's recommendation.

Mrs. Cunningham commented on the impact of starting a week earlier as opposed to a week later. It would be wiser that the school year would end earlier and would be a huge plus and advantage as it relates to sending the transcripts out for deadline applications.

Mr. Harris asked if the committee is able to complete semester prior to Christmas break. Mr. Warren stated they are working strategically to arrive at completing the first semester before the Winter Break.

Mr. Harris added consideration should be given to prior years and revert to what worked then which may not include one full week off during the 1st semester.

Mrs. Fields clarified that the School District is planning to adopt Option A.

Mike Perrone, Chief Financial Officer, stated as far as the discussion on Good Friday, he would like to be sure the Board understands what will happen because of that decision. If another staff development day must be determined, it means the students will be out and it will be wrapped around a weekend and come back on a Monday.

Mrs. LeRoy explained the District will be meeting the state requirements for seat time and for half credit with the way that this is set up.

Jacqueline Bowen, Chief Academic Officer, stated the requirement is 130 hours of instruction time. There must be 65 hours in the first semester and 65 hours in the second semester and this goes beyond that because of mediation and other things.

Mr. Warren explained Option A provides a clearer direction with the 2016-2017 school year start date of August 15.

#### 2017-2018 School Year Calendar

One point of contention for the 2017-2018 School Year Calendar was the Winter Break dates. Three options were presented to that end.

Option A would be December 21, 2017 through January 4, 2018. It's a Thursday through Thursday, and is for 14 days of break.

Option B would be December 18, 2017 through December 29, 2017. That gives you two weeks of Monday through Friday. Logistically what happens with this option is New Year's is on that Monday and the break would have to be extended to allow staff members to recognize New Year's Day which brings everyone back on January 3, 2018, creating a 17 day break.

Option C would be December 25, 2017 through January 5, 2018, providing two full weeks of a break. Sixteen days in total, including weekends. It also incorporates New Year's into that Winter Break.

Mr. Harris asked if there was any discussion about having the Winter Break less than two full weeks so parents don't have to make accommodations for their children while they are back at work. Mr. Warren commented there was discussion, however, it was not a big piece because the committee wanted to retain as many of the summer days that people have historically been accustomed to.

Mrs. Cunningham stated she agrees that the District should maintain the

two week opportunity for some down time to be refreshed to come back.

Mrs. Fields stated she suggests the School Board adopt Option B. She also commented Option A would create an issue with employee and student absences. She said Option C is not one to be considered.

Mrs. Cunningham agreed that Option B makes the most sense.

Mr. Berryman stated Option B would still not get the semester over with by Winter Break.

Mr. Harris asked what conversations were had in regard to reducing the Thanksgiving Break and reverting to the traditional two days break. Mr. Warren stated that was discussed as well and the group ultimately compared the historic one-week break for Thanksgiving to that of the traditional two-week period off for Christmas. Mr. Harris stated the break was historically two days, Thursday and Friday. He also said when the District moved away from that is when problems started with exams and ending semesters.

Mrs. Cunningham said she understood what Mr. Harris was saying. It was her impression that those days were originally proposed to allow flexibility in case of emergency weather conditions. Mr. Warren stated that is when the initial calendar conversations began after Hurricanes Charlie and the other three came through.

Mr. Harris asked if there is any data on absenteeism as to the first week of school and for the days surrounding Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks. He stated that information may be helpful to know statistically if the schools experience 80%, 90%, or 65% attendance.

Mr. Warren verified Option C has been struck down. Options A and B are still negotiable. He asked if absentee data should be returned to the meeting on February 23. The 2017-18 we will still have out there as items. The Christmas Break is really the main piece.

Mrs. LeRoy commented the 2016-2017 school calendar needs to be published.

Mr. Warren stated he will edit the 2016-2017 calendar and will return it as a Work Session item prior to the presentation at the February 23 Board Meeting. He also stated he will begin revisions on the 2017-2018 school year calendar.

Mr. Harris asked for clarification that the school year for 2016-2017 will begin on August 15, 2016. Mr. Warren confirmed that is correct.

Mr. Berryman commented that Spring Break in school year 2017-2018 appears to be very late. He asked why this is the case when school is beginning two weeks earlier. Mr. Warren stated it is due to testing.

Mr. Mullenax asked if the semester will end prior to the Winter Break in school year 2017-2108. He stated it is important that it does from a

classroom teacher's point of view. Mr. Warren confirmed that it will.

Mr. Berryman commented on Option B in relation to the end of the semester prior to Winter Break and the verified seat time that must be adhered to. Jacqueline Bowen, Chief Academic Officer commented seat time has been verified. The Committee was in agreement that the loss of the three days to end with the semester was not going to be significant. Option B does end prior to but it is just short by three days. There is an imbalance but by the next year it will balance back out.

#### Item 8

##### 8. ~~11:20-11:35 AM Standard Student Attire Incentive Fund Grant Application~~

Attachment: ~~Guidance Counselor Other.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~Chart 12 Teaching and Learning Multiple Pathways SY16\_WS 2-9 16\_BM 2-23-16.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~7-1-14to6-30-15PolkTeacherSalary4-28-15Bd.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~Paraeducator Books Bridge.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~Chart 9b Teaching and Learning K-12\_Literacy SY16\_WS 02-9 16\_BM 02-23-16.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~7-1-14to6-30-15PolkParaSalaries4-28-15Bd.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~Standard Student Attire Incentive Fund Budget Impact Analysis 2015-16.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~Standard Student Attire Executive Summary.pdf~~

Attachment: ~~Teacher Media Specialist.pdf~~

#### Item 9

##### 9. [11:20-11:50 AM Redistricting](#)

Attachment: [february 2016 REDISTRICTING UPDATE.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Scott Leopold with DeJong Richter, presented the updated information surrounding the redistricting that will be required for the new K-8 school Citrus Ridge: A Civics Academy. The majority of students that will be attending the school will be from Loughman Oaks Elementary with a few students that will be rezoned from Horizons Elementary. These changes will cause a domino effect because students that will be removed from Loughman Oaks will leave a deficit that can then be filled by alleviating some of the overcrowding from Eastside Elementary.

Superintendent LeRoy requested achievement data for schools effected as their populations shift. Mrs. Cunningham stated this was discussed at the community meeting with the principals.

Mr. Harris shared boundary concerns regarding zones that require families that are located geographically closer to travel farther to the school they attend, as an example the small community on the east side of the lake. Brenda Taguri, Senior Coordinator of Demographics and Statistical Planning, stated Lake Alfred Elementary did not have the capacity to accept any more students that what they originally planned to redistrict although there may be plans to alter the zone map as part of Phase II. Mr. Harris also commented if the change is anticipated it should be done a single time as opposed to rezoning students more than once. Another instance of these geographical concerns is for those families zoned for Horizons Ele. on the east side of Highway 27 that will travel a greater distance to Citrus Ridge.

Mr. Mullenax asked what sort of notification has been sent to families in the area. Mr. Leopold explained there was a community meeting at Horizons Elementary and fliers went home with every student in both English and Spanish. It was also put on the Polk County School District website to collect feedback. Mrs. Cunningham asked for a copy of the presentation including public comments and results report.

Mr. Berryman asked in regards to Boone Middle and Lake Alfred-Addair Middle, if you remove students to rezone them to the K-8, how will this effect student enrollment in those schools over the next few years. Mr. Leopold stated reducing the enrollment we will increase utilization when the School District enters Phase II next year.

Lake Alfred has been a letter F grade school for the last 4 years. If they receive an F grade this year, several things may occur, it may become a charter school, it may be closed, or it may be assumed by the State. The vote is scheduled for the School Board Meeting on March 15, 2016.

Mrs. Cunningham suggested the public hearing be held at Ridge Community High School as a means to encourage community involvement.

#### Item 10

10. [11:50 AM-12:00 PM Charter Review Committee Recommendation to the Superintendent: New Beginnings High School Renewal](#)

Attachment: [New Beginnings High School 8004.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Accountability Plan Progress Report Summary for Renewal.pdf](#)

Attachment: [WS Summary NBHS Renewal 2.9.16.pdf](#)

Attachment: [NBHS-Strengths and Weaknesses CRC Master Response.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Melissa Brady, Director of Charter Schools, and John Small, Assistant Superintendent of Career, Adult, Technical and Multiple Pathways discussed the Charter Review Recommendation for New Beginnings High School Renewal.

New Beginnings opened in 2011 and was originally created for drop-out retrieval. Some areas the school needed to document were:

- is the school an academic success
- is it a viable organization
- is this school faithful to the terms of its charter
- what are the plans for the future
- has this school been involved in any litigation
- what sort of parent concerns have been addressed

The Charter Review committee was made up of 10 people. In December they reviewed the notebook of statistics then a site visit was scheduled. December 10, 2015 was the site visit.

Some issues of concern were:

- Security
- Hallway management
- Many classrooms have multiple grade levels with one instructor.

Everyone on the charter review committee felt the charter should only be granted another 5 year contract.

Mrs. Fields asked what the logic is behind 5 years as opposed to a 15 year plan. Mrs. Brady explained that 5 years was recommended as a means to monitor progress of the areas of concern.

Mrs. Cunningham commented she has toured New Beginnings and stated the academic success has steadily shown improvement

Superintendent LeRoy discussed the increase in graduations from 21-50, and the decrease in drop-outs.

Mr. Wilson asked if there were specific areas that the group thought needed to be addressed or was it a general concern that prevented the group from recommending 15 years. Mr. Small stated it was a general consensus. Mr. Wilson stated a 15 year renewal is appropriate in his opinion.

Mrs. Fields commented on the terrific program and facility.

Mr. Small commented he was very impressed with the outpouring of community support.

Item 11

11. [12:00-12:10 PM Initial Charter Contracts for New Charters Opening in 2016-2017](#)

Attachment: [WS Summary - Initial Charter Contracts for New Charters Opening 2016-2017 2.9.16.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Our Children's Academy 2016-2026 For Board Approval WS](#)



[2.9.16.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Contract Draft DHS to PCSB 2016-2031 For Board Approval WS](#)

[2.9.16.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Draft PCSB to MWH FORM IEPC-SC For Board Approval WS](#)

[2.9.16.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Melissa Brady, Director of Charter Schools, discussed the 3 charter school contracts and terms for schools opening in School Year 2016-2017.

- Cypress Junction Montessori requested a 5 year contract.
- Discovery Academy requested a 15 year contract in order to secure long term financing for their building project.
- Our Children's Academy requested a 10 year contract.

Mr. Harris voiced his concern that Discovery Academy is a brand new high school that will be targeting students in the Tenoroc zone that is currently not at capacity.

Wes Bridges, Counsel for the Board, commented the statutory guidelines are typically 4-5 years for initial charter contracts, but this facility is requesting such a lengthy contract in order to secure financing.

Mr. Wilson asked if Discovery Academy should fail, is the Polk County School District responsible for any monetary repercussions. Mr. Bridges explained that should anything of that nature occur the School District would have an interest in the public subject to encumbrance which they can then decide if they would like to act on. Otherwise the School District will not be compelled to satisfy the debt of a charter school.

Mr. Mullenax asked if charter schools are held to the same guidelines that public schools are in regard to construction. It is his understanding that they are not. If this is true, the School District may end up with a facility they can not use if Discovery Academy is not successful. Mr. Bridges confirmed that charter schools are not subject to the same rules of construction that public schools are.

Item 12

12. [12:10-12:15 PM Update Director, Safety and Vehicle Services Job Description](#)

Attachment: [Director, Safety & Vehicle Services JD Revision 2-9-16 WS.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Brian Warren, Acting Director of Human Resources, discussed the changes to the job description for the Director, Safety and Vehicle Services position. The update will add experience as well as physical environment to the purpose and functions of the position to represent duties currently being done and the areas

the position has responsibility.

Item 13

13. [12:15-12:20 PM Create new Job Description, Dir. Measurement, Eval & Research](#)

Attachment: [Dir Measurement eval 2-9-16 WS v4.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Brian Warren, Acting Director of Human Resources, advised this is a new job description for the upgrade of the current Psychometrician position to a Director, Measurement, Evaluation & Research position. Additional needs have evolved relating to measurement, evaluation and research at the employee, school, district and state levels. Therefore, the scope of the position has increased and requires revisions to the purpose and essential functions resulting in a need to increase the salary grade from a SG 20.1 CS to a SG 21.1 Adm.

Mrs. Fields asked if the psychometrician position would still be available should the District see the need to fill it in the future. Mr. Warren explained that because a new job description has been created, the Psychometrician position remains a part of the database, therefore it would be available should the job need to be filled at a future time.

Jacqueline Bowen, Chief Academic Officer, added that Psychometricians are very difficult to find. Other school districts are actively searching for individuals in this field as the need for increased knowledge in assessments becomes necessary especially with the current End of Year testing requirements.

Superintendent LeRoy stated that as evaluation and assessment needs become more rigid, there may come a time that this position would need to be added back into the Strategic Plan. She explained that this position was contracted out in previous years but is more efficient to have in-house staff to address data questions.

Item 14

14. [12:20-12:25 PM Create two Job Descriptions CDAT Childcare Svcs and Para-Educator, PK, Childcare Services](#)

Attachment: [CDAT-PARA NEW JD 2-9-16.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Brian Warren, Acting Director of Human Resources, explained this would create two new job descriptions for a Child Development Associate Teacher (CDAT), Childcare Services and a Paraeducator, Pre-Kindergarten, Childcare Services. The current job descriptions for these positions do not adequately meet the needs of Infant and Toddlers as required by National Association of Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Developmental Appropriate Practices (DAP), Department of

Children and Families, Florida Administrative Code and licensing requirements for childcare licensure required for the Teen Parent Program/Childcare Services. The requirements differ from the Pre-Kindergarten Program's CDATS and Pre-Kindergarten paraprofessionals, thus the need for separate job descriptions.

Mr. Harris asked if this position falls under the supervision of John Small, Director of Multiple Pathways or Matti Friedt, Director of Preschool Programs. Jacqueline Bowen, Chief Academic Officer stated this position falls under the supervision of Preschool Programs although it is a part of the teen parenting program. Efforts are currently being made to create an alignment so there is no break in the chain.

Item 15

15. ~~12:10-12:15 PM Create Position and Job Description Sr. Coord PBIS~~

Attachment: ~~Sr. Coord. PBIS 2-9-16WS.pdf~~

Item 16

16. ~~12:15-12:20 PM Create New Position and Job Description, Specialist Pre-Employment Services~~

Attachment: ~~Specialist, Pre-Employment JD 2-9-16WS.pdf~~

Item 17

17. [12:25 PM Executive Session](#)

E. Adjournment

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Kay Fields, Board Chair

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Jacqueline M. Byrd, Superintendent