

02 12 2019 Special Work Session 12 30 PM

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Item 1

1. [School Board Members to Discuss Current Events in Education](#)

Minutes:

Ms. Fortney stated she asked Wendy Dodge if we can be more outspoken “politically” to let the public know what is going on instead of just posting this discussion on YouTube. Ms. Fortney feels that Ms. Reynolds suggestion of a Citizens Academy is a great idea to educate the outside. Ms. Reynolds reported that Senator Lee asked for a list of unfunded mandates issued the past few years. She would like to look over the list and remove anything not beneficial for students so that the free money can be redirected to the classrooms.

Mr. Wilson stated that the Concerned Citizens group is concerned that their children don’t have access to the neighborhood schools. We are bussing kids that live a block from a good school across the county to another school. We are spending out of pocket \$12 million a year for transportation that the State doesn’t fund. This directly relates to choice schools.

Mrs. Miller stated that Winter Haven’s magnet schools are not prepared with support for ESE students. Schools are sharing one person to cover two schools. We need to make sure that there is proper support for the children in the community.

Ms. Fortney asked if Orange County is a charter district and what does it mean? Mrs. Miller responded that Orange County is a charter district. Mr. Bridges made it clear that it is not referring to the school district; the county government of Orange County uses a charter form of government.

Ms. Fortney wanted to know why Westwood and Denison are turning children away and sending them to Stambaugh. Mrs. Byrd stated Denison is not full; however their Cambridge classes may be at capacity. Currently it is offered to 8th graders but we will be adding 6th and 7th grades in the near future. If you know of students that are being denied regular classrooms at Westwood or Denison and referred to Stambaugh,

she needs to know. Stambaugh is at capacity. Mr. Hill stated that they have been monitoring school numbers very closely.

Ms. Fortney reported she heard that Lakeland is going charter. Mr. Wilson clarified that Lakeland isn't going charter although he knows that there may be some discussions on this.

Ms. Reynolds spoke on Winter Haven's PEP (Public Education Partnership) and how they help the children in the community. She encourages every municipality to have a PEP program. Mr. Wilson appreciates that PEP is working with Polk Vision, the Superintendent and the School District.

Mrs. Fields stated that she met with Senator Stargel to find ways for the District and community to work closer in alignment with the state legislators on teacher certification. We need to look at other tests other than Pearson's. It needs to be more doable to pass. It gets very costly for teachers when they have to retake it. Several Board Members noted that our adult schools offer prep classes for these exams.

Mrs. Miller is concerned about the number of requests from schools for behavioral support. She asked for a work session presentation on our behavior support services and how it works. Staff doesn't understand the process going into alternative or secondary support. Mrs. Byrd said she would add it to a work session.

Mrs. Fields and Ms. Reynolds stated that Senator Stargel and other legislators would like to schedule a tour of our academies. It would be great for them to hear from the students.

Mrs. Miller would like the legislators to see the ESE center schools as well so that they can see the need for funding. Doris Sanders and Karen Siegel, in specific.

Mr. Wilson states that we should be proud of our Work Force program. He hopes that there is a different path for kids that cannot obtain a regular diploma. For some students a regular diploma is not the best option. Students should be ready for a career at the age of 18 after graduating. Employers have a demand for skill sets and we aren't preparing students for those jobs. Mrs. Cunningham agrees and would advocate for a technical school for Lakeland, Winter Haven, Haines City, Auburndale and Frostproof, if we had the funding.

Mrs. Fields would like to see a list of all of the career academy certifications and how many students take advantage of these programs. Mrs. Byrd stated that the information is provided in the updated pamphlet. Ms. Reynolds suggested the information be on Face Book so that the public knows about the programs offered to our kids.

Ms. Fortney spoke about the Fire Academy program for high school students and how several schools around the county have adopted this program. She stated bus drivers and other staff are able to take their CPR training there.

Mrs. Miller stated district staff met with those charter schools that are going to be affected by our decision to discontinue providing their transportation. She didn't like the way the Board received the proposal to discontinue service to charter schools; she needs good data beforehand. She feels the Board should consider giving charter schools more time to configure their transportation. We need to look at how we are delivering information and everyone should be updated before releasing it to the community.

Mrs. Byrd stated that this past summer area managers, teachers, and bus drivers expressed their frustrations to the Board about not only their pay but also not being able to make their routes on time. You, the Board, charged her with listening to these concerns. We addressed the first two of their three frustrations: pay, discipline, routes. This was a great stress reducer for them once implemented. The drivers were very appreciative of the outcomes. They are concerned about getting kids to school on time because they are held accountable for that. We began to look into the 'under 2-mile' students and charter school transportation. We notified the charters schools at that time of our intent to discontinue service. They were given ample notice about the district's

intent to discontinue services in January. Their contract states a 30-day notice is required. We received their proposal late Friday afternoon and we will review it.

Mrs. Byrd also informed the Board that we are looking at all schools and current routes. When we plan the new routing we also have to include ESE students, magnet schools, Opportunity scholarships, and McKinney Vento, as well as new subdivisions and housing planned for not only the coming year but the year or so afterwards. Mrs. Byrd related that teachers have also added their voices for the need to have students in their classes on time.

Mr. Wilson commented on the concerns he has heard from teachers and parents of students having to get up at 4 AM and getting home after 6 or 7 at night. If we had plenty of bus drivers this wouldn't be an issue, but we don't. He understands some charter schools may need additional time to establish their own transportation. He hopes the district is able to work with them but this is a difficult time for all of us. We don't have the resources to continue to do it.

Mrs. Miller stated several of the charters are serving students that we do not. We should be cognizant of that and see how we can help them move into transporting them. Not that we owe them anything, but it's the right thing to do. Nobody is advocating that we keep doing it at the cost of our own children. She doesn't disagree with what we are doing but with how it was presented. She would like data to explain where the problems may be. Is it behavior, mileage, funding, or other issues?

Mrs. Cunningham believes the issue is in how it was being presented. Staff comes to us with an idea, not data. Mrs. Miller prefers the data beforehand.

Ms. Reynolds stated that previous Boards had requested items come to them with the cost included. It is her understanding the transportation department spends most of the summer months refurbishing buses and working on the routes to get students to school on time.

Ms. Fortney stated that she spoke to a Superintendent while at a meeting in Tallahassee who stated they doesn't provide bus transportation to their Magnet/Choice schools.

Mrs. Byrd stated it takes 1-2 months to back out all the current routes and input the new routes without charters. They will need to be configured without charters and implement all other required programs (ESE, Magnet, McKinney etc.) The Superintendent stated that we have to think about reviewing boundaries with the new schools that are coming up. Mrs. Cunningham agreed.

Mrs. Field shared that she is very uncomfortable with receiving emails from any other Board Member concerning their stance on an issue which is to be voted on. This is very close to violating Sunshine Laws. Mrs. Fields asked not to be included on this email thread. It is an unsafe area for her. Mrs. Cunningham agreed.

Acting School Board Attorney John Murphy stated that he feels there isn't any technical violation of "Sunshine" if a Board Member posts or expresses a viewpoint and specifically says "please, do not respond to this." Mr. Wilson asked what if they say this is how they're going to vote. Mr. Murphy stated that it is not a good practice for the board and doesn't encourage it because it places other Board Members in a bad position. But keep in mind that, in this instance, the Board Member that generated the email would have the violation issue. You do have first amendment rights of free speech. You are allowed to take written communications as long as they are not solicited with the intent of having something come back or create a conversation outside of a published meeting. The Round Table is the time to speak and a published meeting notice is scheduled so constituents are aware of what's going on.

Ms. Reynolds also agrees with Mrs. Fields and doesn't want to receive the emails either. Anything that has your opinion in it, please do not copy her on it.

Mrs. Miller has a concern about a proposed legislative bill providing a tax exemption

for individuals over the age of 65 and who have owned a home for at least 25 years. Everyone should worry about education. This will hurt education's funding.

Marianne Capozziello feels that our employees don't understand our financial situation and how badly we are being starved for money by the State of Florida. The Governor's budget put more money into the FEFP but the Speaker of the House said that it's not conservative enough. They also put in more unfunded mandates. Under the Governor's new plan, the \$9,000 for bonuses is to cover 45,000 highly effective teachers state wide.

Mrs. Byrd stated that she takes Jason Pitts to all of her speaking engagements so that he can educate the public on our budget.

Mrs. Miller asked Mr. Wilson if he is researching the Blue Ribbon Panel that would review our purchasing/spending. Mr. Wilson said he couldn't find anyone who would do it. The people from our community don't want to get in between education and legislators. It's a huge challenge. Mrs. Byrd stated that FADSS did a survey for Polk in 2013 for accreditation purposes and we addressed their recommendations.

Mr. Wilson stated the focus has to be on students. One legislator has said their goal is to break the unions. We (the district) are not a broken system; our magnet schools are doing as well or better than some of the charter schools.

INFORMATION ITEMS

BOARD AGENDA REVIEW

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Meeting adjourned at 12:57 PM. Minutes were approved and attested this 23rd day of April, 2019.

Lynn Wilson, Board Chair

Jacqueline M. Byrd, Superintendent