

03 27 2012 Special Work Session

For ADA assistance, contact the Office of Equity and Compliance, 534-0781, at least 3 business days before the meeting.

New Business

Board Agenda Review

Discussion

Item 1

1. [Conversion Charter Discussion Continuation](#)

Attachment: [Complete PDF Summary LHS Harrison.pdf](#)

Attachment: [WS 3 20 12-Conversion Charter Discussion.pdf](#)

Attachment: [WS 3 27 12 Conversion Charter Discussion Continued-REVISED HANDOUTS.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Harrison-E.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Superintendent Sherrie B. Nickell spoke on the recent issues and discussions of several schools regarding conversion charters.

Carolyn Bridges, Senior Director of Magnet, Choice and Charter, reported she contacted the Department of Education regarding Harrison Arts 4 Polk's letter of intent to initiate a start-up charter and keep the facilities. The DOE reaffirmed that a start-up charter does not absorb the current facilities. There is not a process in place that excludes teachers and parents from a vote and then takes over the building. No one from the Harrison Association consulted with the District Office nor the Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter. Harrison recently received an \$18.6 million renovation.

Differences between traditional public schools and charter schools:

1. Accountability - state requires traditional schools to submit SIP (School

- Improvement Plans); charters are exempt unless required by contract, Title I, schools grades, or Differentiated Accountability
2. Administrators - charters do not require administrators to be certified or degreed
 3. Oversight/Authority - charter boards may be appointed or selected through by-laws and articles of incorporation and they may have a for-profit or not-for-profit management company
 4. Facilities - over the last several years PECO (Public Education Capital Outlay) funds were given only to charter schools; Public schools have to follow more stringent SREF (State Requirements for Educational Facility) building standards; charter schools are allowed to follow local building codes
 5. Class size - traditional schools meet class by class; charters are allowed to meet an average at the school level
 6. General funding for personnel and programs - funding follows the student; (charter systems and high performing charters only pay a service fee of 5% on the 1st 250 students per school or max of 500 per system (McKeel and Lake Wales) regardless of the number of students. In Polk County, charter schools pay an administration fee between .6 and 5%.
 7. Food Program (breakfast and lunch) - charters are not required to provide meals, including free and reduced
 8. Parents - charters may dismiss students with grade/discipline issues and if parents fail to meet participation guidelines
 9. Teachers - Charters may develop their own Teacher Evaluation System, use the Sponsor's system, or follow the state's, which has not been developed; districts are to have one in place for 2013; Senate Bill 736
 10. Transportation
 11. Virtual Learning

Mrs. Bridges provided responses to questions by several school board members from the March 20th Work Session.

- How can Harrison refuse to inform us when they plan to vote on charter status? Legally, what can we do? Wes Bridges, School Board Attorney, replied the Superintendent and School Board can do anything that does not violate the anti-retaliation law.

Dr. Nickell reported that the Harrison Center wishes to become an independent school; which would then allow them to apply for charter status. Currently, Harrison does not qualify as a stand alone school and could not pursue a charter application. Harrison would need 15 additional teacher units to provide their academic program.

Mr. O'Reilly provided information on an August 2009 agreement between the principals of Lakeland High and Harrison. He felt that the District should take a stand on the issues and read a draft resolution recognizing Harrison for its unique opportunities and individualism. Several Board Members supported his idea.

Other Board Members would like to see a partnership between the two programs replicating Bartow High, Bartow International Baccalaureate, and Summerlin Academy. These three programs are under one school number, share space and teachers, and have not diminished the integrity of any of the programs.

It was requested that the School Board Attorney review the resolution for the April 10th meeting. Mrs. Sellers does not support the resolution and voiced concern that the charter discussions of both schools might conflict with the resolution.

Superintendent Nickell reported that the situation is complicated with many variables. Both sites have incredible programs and the opportunities are there for the students. Ideally, if the programs can work in tandem, that would be the optimum solution with instructional modifications. She would like to see all district schools remain in tact; instructional issues can be addressed, and the integrity will be preserved. She has asked both principals to enter into mediation: what are the sticking points? Identify the problems? Breathe, mediate the problems, and look for common ground.

Mrs. Fields felt it is important that the Board take a vote on the school's identity either through the resolution or a separate vote. Decide if there are two schools at one site or two stand alone schools.

At 12:40 PM, the charter discussion was convened to allow the presentation on Nashville Academies. The charter discussion resumed at 2:35 PM.

Lakeland High School options:

1. Lakeland applies for a conversion charter without including Lois Cowles Harrison Center of Visual and Performing Arts
2. Lakeland submits a conversion charter proposal that includes Harrison
3. Lakeland submits a conversion proposal includes Harrison with a different enrollment process and focus than that of a county-wide offering

Each application has to be reviewed on its own merit, guided by charter law, then the Superintendent and School Board would make the best informed decision.

Mrs. Cunningham felt it was prudent for Dr. Nickell to continue trying to resolve the issue and to provide a recommendation at the April 10, 2012 School Board meeting.

Mr. O'Reilly reiterated his support for the Resolution and announced that Lakeland High will have their staff vote on May 1.

Item 2

2. [Academies of Nashville Continuous Discussion](#)

Attachment: [Jay%20Steele's%20PP%20-%20March%202012%20Study%20Tour1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Polk Academies School Board Presentation.pdf](#)

Minutes:

John Small, Senior Director of WorkForce Education introduced Debbie Burdett (Polk Academies), Doug Lockwood (Winter Haven Public Education Partnership), Dr. Naomi Boarder (Polk State College), and Rick Delanoe (FORD Foundation).

Nashville, Tennessee has a variety of full academies in every high school (a wall-to-wall program). Three groups oversee the partnerships: CEO Champion (group of business leaders sustain and provide top level support), industrial counselors for career clusters, and individual advisers.

The time is right to strengthen and create more academies, educate the community of the benefits of academies (smaller learning communities that statistically provide benefits for all students). It is critical that higher education community leaders and business partners be a part of the drive providing cohesive glue, strategic direction (economic development, organization structure) (Nashville has two private outside entities: Alignment Nashville and the Pencil Foundation).

Polk Vision would like to be part of the glue that takes the academies to the next level (one additional person on staff is needed). Currently, 22 communities around the country share in the wall-to-wall concept and it is believed that Polk County has the potential to be a national model.

Dr. Nickell commented that the element of engagement of the student is critical. There is enormous potential to improve and increase our academies.

John Small reported that business partners are the key, the glue, of the programs. Students speak with enthusiasm and pride in their academies. Every child should have that experience, that opportunity to love going to school, to love learning. Polk County has a lot of the pre-steps already in place.

Dr. Nickell announced that district staff will be submitting time lines for expanding programs. A lot of the necessary foundation is already in place (9th grade Academies and numerous academic academies (Power Academy, Aerospace Academy, Medical Academy, Legal, etc.). We could be on the same pace as Nashville; 3-5 year period. Positive consequences: reduction in number and cost of discipline.

Item 3

3. [Final Strategic Plan Report 2008-09 to 2010-11](#)

Attachment: [Final Strategic Plan Report 2008 11.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Information

Adjournment

Work Session adjourned at 3:00 PM. Minutes were approved and attested this 24th day of April, 2012.

Hazel Sellers, Board Chair

Sherrie B. Nickell, Ed. D, Superintendent