

**SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA  
WORKSHOP – June 25, 2019**

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida, conducted a workshop on Tuesday, June 25, 2019, 12:26 p.m., in the Cabinet Conference Room, Administration Building, 301 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Largo, Florida.

Present: Ms. Rene Flowers, Chairperson, Mrs. Carol J. Cook, Vice-Chairperson, Mrs. Lisa Cane, Dr. Nicole Carr, Mr. Bill Dudley, Ms. Joanne Lentino, and Mrs. Eileen Long, Members; Dr. Michael Grego, Superintendent, Dr. William Corbett, Deputy Superintendent, and Mr. David Koperski, School Board Attorney.

**Review of Agenda:** There were no changes to the agenda.

**The following topics were discussed:**

- **Budget Update:** Mr. Kevin Smith, associate superintendent, finance and business services, and Ms. Karen Coffey, executive director, budget and resource allocation, reviewed the proposed budget plan for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Mr. Smith shared that the district's budget cycle continues throughout the year, funding sources vary. They are currently preparing for the First Public Hearing on Tentative Millage Rates and District Budget scheduled for July 30, 2019; at that time millage rates will be set. On September 10th, the budget comes before the board for final approval. He shared that at the end of 2015-2016, the board approved a 5% contingency rate, which was met by the district. Mr. Smith recommends it be higher than 5%; we are currently about 7.5%. It is important to have healthy reserves due to our hurricane concerns. He advised that our tax role drives funding, and with the millage rate decrease, the district is unable to increase wages appropriately, which impacts the ability to hire sufficient bus drivers, for example. This needs to be clearly communicated to our legislators. In the current budget, we are about equal with our expenditures, compared to 2011-2012, when the district had a budget shortfall of \$32 million. We are still funded below the consumer price index. The state increased the base student allocation by \$75, which is better than last year's \$0.47. However, this year's budget includes the Best & Brightest Teacher/Principal allocation and a decrease in funding for the digital classrooms allocation. Additionally, Pinellas has less funding due to the Funding Compression Allocation, which gives money to districts with a lower tax base. The district does receive a District Cost Differential, which factors in the cost of living in Pinellas County; we receive \$1.5 million. Dr. Grego encourages support of this line item. The majority of the funding is in categoricals, money that must be spent in specific ways. Our district is fortunate to have the support of the tax referendum that is used to increase teacher salaries and support the arts. In 2020, this will be coming to voters again. Legislation now states that we must share these funds with charter schools. If voters don't approve it, it will negatively impact teacher salaries. We must also share a percentage of our capital outlay funds with charter schools; this year it will increase by approximately \$500,000. Our district is in a good financial position because we carry very little long term debt. About 74% of our budget is spent on instruction which does not include our transportation costs. Dr. Carr asked what percentage of the budget comes from federal entitlement grants. Dr. Grego said it is

about 3-4%. Mr. Smith added that all grants total about 6% of our budget. Our total budget is about \$1.6 billion.

- **District Strategic Plan:** Dr. Michael Grego and Ms. Jennifer Dull, director, strategic planning and policy, reviewed the following document: *District Strategic Plan 2019-2020 draft*. Dr. Grego began by sharing that the budget is aligned to the district strategic plan and resources are coordinated to work toward achievement of the goals. Ms. Dull said this plan is written with more specifics and intentionality. She receives feedback through surveys, parent cadre meetings, principal meetings, and the development of school improvement plans which match the goals. The strategic directions encompass seven strategic goals. She said that new this year is the combining of strategic goals regarding effective and efficient use of resources and the addition of a strategic goal for communication and stakeholder engagement. Strategic Initiatives are set to close the achievement gap between black and non-black students; to provide high-achieving students with a personalized path to college success; to provide a personalized learning pathway for students in grades 3-12; to provide exemplary instruction in visual and performing arts; to provide equity and excellence for all students; and, to support student health and wellbeing. Dr. Carr requested a baseline be included in the goals. Ms. Dull noted the addition of the Restorative Practices initiative under strategic goal 3. Dr. Grego advised that the district strategic plan will be discussed again at the July 16<sup>th</sup> workshop and will come before the board for approval on September 10<sup>th</sup>, along with the budget.
- **Legislative Update:** Ms. Megan Fay, Capital City Consulting, reviewed the following document: *2019 Legislative Review, Pinellas County School District, Ron LaFace, Jr., Megan Fay, Capital City Consulting*. Ms. Fay shared that the legislative session ended on May 3, 2019. The budget was completed and 197 bills were passed. Governor DeSantis signed the state budget on Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup> for \$90.9 billion with \$131 million in line items. He also signed HB7071-Workforce Education. SB7070 by Senator Diaz, was approved by the Governor on May 9<sup>th</sup> and is effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. This bill is related to K-12 education. It creates the Family Empowerment Scholarship, a voucher program, for which up to 18,999 low and lower middle income students will be eligible. It restructures the Best and Brightest Teacher Bonus program, but moved it into the FEFP as a categorical. It creates the Community Schools (\$10 million) grant program, and eliminates the Schools of Hope. SB7030-Implementation of Legislative Recommendations of the MSDHSPSC states that a school board must “facilitate” a charter school’s access to security personnel options. Mr. Koperski said the district is giving charter schools the list of graduating school security officers, so we are meeting this requirement. HB7123-Taxation specifies that referendums approved by voters on or after July 1, 2019, must share the millage proportionately with charter schools. It also sets August 2-6 as the back-to-school tax holiday. The legislative committee weeks begin September 16 and end the week of December 9, 2019. The 2020 Legislative Session begins January 14<sup>th</sup> and ends March 13<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Grego said that we need to start making visits to our local delegates in August, prior to their committee work. Last year we did the Legislative Briefing at the Stavros Institute, which worked out well. This year we should move it up to September. Mrs. Cook suggested that Megan Fay and Ron LaFace, Jr., attend. Legislators are still looking for Steve Swartzel, our legislative liaison

who retired. Ms. Flowers said that if they go to Tallahassee to meet with the legislators, it will be a reinforcement. Dr. Grego suggested this be discussed at the July 16 workshop.

- **Elementary Literacy Audit:** Mr. Kevin Hendrick, associate superintendent, teaching and learning services, Mr. Michael Feeny, executive director, elementary education, and, Ms. Holly Slaughter, elementary reading and language arts specialist, reviewed the following documents: *Pinellas County Schools Elementary Literacy: Building the Foundation for Excellence*, *External Curriculum Review Overview*, *Ongoing Commitment to Literacy Instruction*, and *Highlights of Module Revisions 2019*. Mr. Hendrick said the Public Consulting Group auditors reviewed written curriculum for K-5 English Language Arts, then assessed the way student knowledge is monitored and how the curriculum is taught. Since 2015, the Core Modules are supplemented by additional instructional and assessment resources. The intent of the review was to strengthen the Core Modules. At this time, the first six weeks of content is completed and ready for teachers to assess. The grade-level modules will be rolled out during teacher training, being offered at different times and locations, for which they will be paid. The review found that there was a need to focus more on foundational skills in grades K-2. The district had already begun this work. Dr. Carr thanked them for their work and complimented the handout.
- **Mental Health Plan Update:** Ms. Lori Matway, associate superintendent, student and community services, Ms. Donna Sicilian, executive director, student services, and Mr. Clint Herbic, associate superintendent, operational services, reviewed the following documents: *2019-2020 Student Services Mental Health Allocation and Threat Assessments Plan*, *Pinellas County School Board Workshop, June 25, 2019*, and *new Threat Assessment Administrator job description*. It was stated that Chancellor Oliva, brought SB 7030 forward; it is the bill that builds on school safety and security initiated by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission. The requirements set forth in the legislation mirrored what our district already has in place. Ms. Sicilian spoke about the mental health awareness training that is being delivered across the district. She advised that we have increased the number of school-based psychologists and social workers. School-based psychologists are a critical shortage area, but we are fully staffed due to the efforts of Mr. Cowley, managing officer, psychological services. The middle and high schools have a full-time social worker. She stated that we are also expanding our mental health partnerships with Suncoast Community Health and PEMHS. She said working with these cases is very difficult work. The district is providing more student services through the prevention office. Up until 2017, it was a two person office. In 2018, Title IV funds were utilized to add 6 additional staff. The data that supports the additional staff are the increase in student tobacco offenses (includes vaping), increase in first time drug/alcohol offenses, increase in bullying reports by 51%, and increased threat assessments by 80%. Since January 2019, there have been 600 tips sent to the Sandy Hook Promise Anonymous Reporting App. Dr. Grego shared that area superintendents are currently dedicating about 20% of their time to threat assessments. Thus, the request for a Threat Assessment Administrator who will report to Mr. Herbic, associate superintendent, operational services. The job description will come before the board for approval at the next meeting. It was stated that Mr. Dennis Russo's job, administrator, school safety, is about

school hardening; his position is required by state statute. He also reports to Mr. Herbic. Dr. Grego added that the state does not provide enough funding; but, we still need to continue to get in front of the concerns to try and prevent tragedies. This new job is about identifying mental health safety concerns and working with these students. Mr. Dudley and Dr. Carr both shared that they continue to get questions about teachers carrying firearms, even though the district has communicated the message a number of times that it is not in our plan.

➤ **Leadership Discussion:**

○ **Dr. Grego:**

1) He advised the board that he is planning a special board meeting following the July 16, 2019, school board workshop, to handle time sensitive items, such as personnel.

2) He advised the board that he wants the district to pursue a Head Start Partnership with Lutheran Services, with the intent of improving early literacy for Pre-K students. Students enrolled in the district's Pre-K have an average readiness rate of 70%; Lutheran Services programs rate is 43%. The proposal is to open six Head Start classes under the oversight of PCS; two at Woodlawn, two at Lealman Avenue, and two at High Point for a total of 108 students. These programs will be six hours a day with wrap around services for day care. The teachers and staff will be PCS employees. A blended curriculum will be used, meeting the requirements of Head Start, and adding our standards to it. The agreement with Lutheran Services will be from August 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020, with the option for renewal each year up to three years. Termination clauses will be included for either party and collective bargaining agreements will be honored.

Ms. Flowers shared her concern that she does not want to leave the district open for contract issues.

Dr. Grego stated that he will send the agreement to the board for their review prior to it coming before the board for approval.

- **Mrs. Cook:** 1) She stated that the FSBA Bylaws call for each district to designate a board member and alternate to serve on the FSBA Legislative Committee. It can be the same board member, if the district so chooses. Currently it is Ms. Flowers with Mrs. Long as the alternate. Ms. Flowers and Mrs. Long stated that they are interested in continuing on this committee. The board members were in agreement. She said that board members are also welcome to serve on the Legislative Advocacy Subcommittee. Dr. Carr and Mrs. Cane are interested in serving. FSBA is calling for input on the development of their 2020 Legislative Platform; they begin with items that were not fully accomplished from 2019. Board members are asked to submit their proposals by July 26, 2019.
- **Mr. Koperski:** He spoke to the board about the new legislation requiring board members approve travel that exceeds \$500.00. He will write an agenda item for board travel that is planned that exceeds \$500.00 per event. Any travel not listed, would need approval by the board.

No official actions were taken by the board at this workshop. An audio recording of this workshop is filed in the board office archives. This workshop adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

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Chairperson  
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Secretary