

The District School Board of Indian River County met on April 12, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. The discussion was held in the Teacher Education Center located in the School District Office at the J.A. Thompson Administrative Center located at 6500 – 57th Street, Vero Beach, Florida 32967. District School Board Members attending were: Chairman Dale Simchick, Vice Chairman Shawn R. Frost, and Board Members: Matthew McCain, Claudia Jiménez, and Charles G. Searcy. Dr. Mark J. Rendell, Superintendent of Schools; and Suzanne D’Agresta, School Board Attorney, were also present.

District School Board Discussion Session Minutes

- I. Discussion was called to order by Chairman Simchick.

- II. ITEMS PLACED ON AGENDA BY BOARD MEMBERS
 - A. Charles Searcy**
 1. Board Member requested an update on Coach Joe. It was noted that the letter from the State did not provide a complete picture of the incident. Mrs. D’Agresta noted that the letter was an internal process that was different from the School District’s process. There was no consensus to remove it from the DOA (Department of Administrative Hearings).
 2. District Email Filters
Board discussed the District’s email screening filters. Concern was that the Board was not receiving emails in a timely manner.
 - B. Claudia Jiménez**
 1. Calendar Start Times
Board Members discussed the timeline for notification of “proposed” changes to start times. Dr. Rendell noted that the “proposed” start times for schools would not change for the 2016-2017 school year. The proposed times were being considered for the 2017-2018 school year. If it moved forward, the District would begin with town hall meetings in the fall of 2016. Dr. Rendell described the start time proposal and research that substantiated that high school students performed better by starting later and elementary students performed better starting earlier.
 2. Prayer in Schools, Freedom from Religion
It was noted that Dr. Rendell spoke with all of the schools and Mrs. D’Agresta was preparing information to be distributed to schools.
 3. Indian River County School District’s Virtual School Classes
Dr. Rendell stated that there would be two classes offered during the summer of 2016. Computer access would be the same. He said that students would still have the same options from other virtual providers contracted by the School District.

C. Chairman Simchick

1. Board Attorney Evaluation

Board Members discussed whether or not evaluating the Board Attorney was needed. It was noted that the Board Attorney did not work for the School District full time and was an outside contractor. Chairman Simchick said that she would contact Brevard and St. Lucie Counties to see if they had an evaluation form and bring it back to the next Discussion Session. Board Members were asked to bring back their thoughts on whether or not to include goals and objectives in the evaluation process. Chairman Simchick said that she would ask if Mrs. Poysell had any information. Board Members talked about the evaluation process for the Executive Assistant to the School Board. It was noted that past practices was to have the Superintendent do the evaluation, with input from the Chair.

2. Code of Student Conduct, Dress Code

Dr. Rendell spoke to staff about the need for a dress code for inappropriate symbols and the possibility of going to a unified dress code. He said that the dress code had been handled as a homegrown, school decision. The Code of Conduct Committee discussed, at their meeting, going to a unified dress code. Feedback to the Superintendent was that the Committee would not make a recommendation. The Committee agreed that it should be a school decision.

The Chair recognized a member of the audience. Dr. Martinez was asked to clarify the discussion that took place at the Code of Conduct Meeting. She said that the Committee had not completed their review and recommendations. Mrs. D'Agresta said that she had sent an email to the Board on Friday and brought copies with her regarding Court Opinions on flags and symbols. A Board Member asked the Board what their positions were on the subject of manners of civility, feeling of safety, and respect. Board Member mentioned whether or not computers should be removed because they were used in one of the incidents. Dr. Rendell said that it was a matter of improving student behavior and providing training for all staff on how to make that happen. Issues across the State were handled by addressing the individual incident.

The Chair recognized a member of the audience to speak, again, on this topic. In closing, a Board Member recapped her understanding that Dr. Rendell would work with his staff to ensure that the District created a school climate that would induce a positive environment for all students. Dr. Rendell said that he would keep the Board updated on what training steps were taken.

3. Graduation Assignments

Chairman announced that there would be a list of graduations and end-of-year events created to ensure that Board Members had an opportunity to sign up.

4. Charter School Student/Teacher Ratios regarding Desegregation Order

Board Members discussed memorializing, in writing, to the charter schools efforts required, by law, in order to comply with the Desegregation Order. The School Board could ask if they were in compliance and what action they were taking to comply. Also, include that the School District was seeking unitary status. Mrs. D'Agresta said that it was allowable. She mentioned federal laws as well as local. Board Member mentioned that the contracts should include compliance. Dr. Rendell tasked Mr. Green to contact the charter schools to have the conversation with charter schools.

5. Letters from Indian River Charter High School Students

Chairman Simchick reported to the Board regarding the response letter she sent to students in response to the letters written to the District School Board Members. It was noted that the letters were dropped off anonymously. Board Members discussed the issue.

6. Discussion Items

The Chairman asked, respectfully, if Board Members could notify the School Board's Executive Assistant regarding any items they wished to discuss so that the subjects could be added to the amendments to the Agenda on Monday prior to the meeting or bring the subject up, at the meeting, during the adoption of the Orders of the Day. The purpose was to give community members an opportunity to attend and to notify staff.

D. Shawn Frost

No items.

E. Mr. McCain

No items.

III. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Frost reported on his attendance at the Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting.

Dr. Rendell spoke of the sidewalk project that included a request to put a gate behind Sebastian River High School, with an easement for pedestrian access to campus. Mr. Frost attended the Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments meeting. He said that he learned quite a bit regarding employee benefits and pensions that could result in raising taxes to balance the budget. Mr. Frost suggested that the presenter give the same 15-minute presentation to the School Board.

IV. ITEMS PLACED ON AGENDA BY SUPERINTENDENT – Dr. Rendell

A. Possible Dates for Community Meetings

Dr. Rendell passed out a list of dates. He suggested a televised, State of the Schools Address to be held on April 28 in TEC at 6 p.m. Dr. Rendell also suggested an audio recorded, School Board Members Discussion Session at Pelican Island Elementary School at 1 p.m. in the cafeteria and an audio recorded Superintendent's Discussion Session to be held on May 24 at Oslo Middle School at 1 p.m. in the cafeteria. Dates for possible Town Hall Meetings were presented. A Board Member suggested that a Town Hall Meeting be held at the end of the school year, with the community, without staff. A list of concerns could be created for further information, if needed.

Board Members discussed the dates and made suggestions. One board Member suggested not to provide lunch, evening better than day time to ensure no disruption of class time. Dr. Rendell mentioned that the dates would not interfere with testing dates. Board Members were fine with the dates, as long as the Principals were in agreement. Chairman said that she would not be available April 28. However, May 10 and 28 dates seemed to be fine.

B. Items Added to the Evening Business Meeting

Dr. Rendell stated that he requested to add Consent G a Personnel matter, Action F Vero Beach High School Citrus Bowl building condition change, and Action G Supplementary Plant Survey in regard to the Citrus Bowl condition change. He said that in order to keep the timeline going for the Citrus Bowl project, it was necessary to place these items on the evening Agenda.

V. ADJOURNMENT – Chairman Simchick

Discussion adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m.