

The District School Board of Indian River County met on September 13, 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: Vice Chairman Shawn R. Frost and Board Members: Claudia Jiménez and Charles G. Searcy. Dr. Mark J. Rendell, Superintendent of Schools; and Suzanne D’Agresta, School Board Attorney, were also present. Chairman Dale Simchick and Board Member Matthew McCain were not present.

Discussion Session Minutes

I. Discussion Session was called to order by Vice Chairman Frost.

II. ITEMS PLACED ON AGENDA BY BOARD MEMBERS

A. Mr. McCain

(Absent)

B. Chairman Simchick

(Absent)

C. Shawn Frost

1. Job Descriptions

Dr. Rendell said that the District had a job description for all positions, with the exception of supplemental positions. He said that they could work on supplemental job descriptions.

D. Claudia Jiménez

1. Questions from the workshop held August 23, 2016, regarding data presented on the Desegregation Order and charter schools required data reporting.

Dr. Rendell answered questions on over representation of students and faculty. Mrs. D’Agresta agreed with Dr. Rendell that there were no penalties but that there were goals for the District to work towards. Dr. Rendell stated that charter school data was currently being monitored by the School District and would be included in future reports to the Board. He said that he would copy the Board on information he received from Mr. Green. Board Member asked if there was clarity from the State, in writing, regarding reporting and compliance expectations. Mrs. D’Agresta said that there was nothing in writing from the State but a training meeting was to be held by the State on required reporting.

2. Questions on Student Testing.

Dr. Rendell said that the State required all District to use the same format for test schedules for the school year. He said that testing was needed during the school year for progress monitoring before the final tests were taken at the end of the school year.

Citizens were given an opportunity to speak on this issue.

Board Members asked about the cost of testing levels 4 and 5, 5-year-old computer testing, and the cost of testing that could include teacher time. They asked that it be noted for future reference that this could be a project for the Board's Audit Committee. Dr. Rendell said that he planned to present a demonstration of the computer-based testing for kindergarten and first grade students at the next workshop.

3. Career and Technical Millage

A Board Member wanted to know how much the District received through grants and why was it was then necessary to fund career and technical programs from the .5 millage referendum. Mr. Morrison said that the funding from CAPE was a fractional dollar amount. Dr. Rendell stated that new program costs were in the upper hundreds of thousands of dollars for equipment, software, etc. He said that the District had to ensure that students not going to college were given an opportunity to graduate from high school with a certification to start working in their chosen careers.

4. Board Corporate, Chain of Command

Board Member talked about the need to follow chain of command.

E. Charles Searcy

1. Plan to eliminate the need for a Tax Anticipation Note.

Dr. Rendell explained some of the reasons the District asked for the issuance of a TAN for solvency for the first few months of the 2016-2017 fiscal year. He reviewed past practice. Mr. Morrison talked about a potential fix for future years. However, he presented information that depicted the State's budget that anticipated receiving a small increase in funding for fiscal year 2018 and a shortfall anticipated in fiscal year 2019 of one billion dollars. Mr. Morrison said that the only way to avoid going out for a TAN was to raise revenues or cut expenditures. He said that increasing revenue would not cover the need. Build up liquidity in reserves would be the only avenue, other than cutting staff. Dr. Rendell stated that several School Districts would be petitioning the State to cover the startup funding for FEFP until the local tax revenue was received to avoid going out for a TAN. He said that as they prepared the budget for 2017-2018, they would ensure that it was even leaner than this year. Mr. Morrison stated that the bids had been received for the TAN and would be presented to the Board at the September 27 business meeting. Board Member suggested that for future workshops on TANs, it would be more helpful to use actual figures in the video for the School District, rather than using an example from another District.

2. Plan for ensuring that the District would not have to go to the voters (taxpayers) for another "critical operating needs" tax referendum

Dr. Rendell stated that he never promised that the District would not go to the voters for another tax referendum. He told the public that they would work towards not being in the same financial positions in four years.

Staff would be looking into how to absorb the costs into the budget. Dr. Rendell said that the budget was still at 68% of what the budget was in 2007. Board Member noted that ensuring that the budget was able to run without a TAN and absorbing the funding to eliminate the need for a tax referendum would be a huge challenge. It was important to keep in mind that supporting teachers and students was essential. Citizens were given an opportunity to ask questions.

3. Brief update on the Accelerated Reading Program and why we did away with it.
Dr. Rendell explained that the Accelerated Reading software program was an incentive program/contest with prizes, rather than an academic program. After careful analysis, the decision was made to cut the program from secondary schools saving \$60,000, after finding out that it was not being utilized and that students figured out how to game the program. Elementary level schools were going to continue to use the program. One middle school may purchase the software for a reduced purchase of \$3,800 from fundraisers. Dr. Rendell noted that the program was not to be used towards a grade. He apologized that the District did not notify the classroom teachers until they returned from summer break.
4. Employee Handbook
Board Member suggested that a very simple handbook be created giving employees general information on the work starting and ending times, vacation time, sick time, etc.
5. Safety and Security Audit
Dr. Rendell said the District had an Audit last May. He said that he would get a copy for the Board Member.
6. Workman's Compensation Insurance Policy Cost.
Dr. Rendell said that he would get that information.
7. Placement of New Teachers with IEP Students and ESE Needs
Board Member talked about IEPs being looked at in a timely manner. Mrs. Dampier explained the process. Dr. Rendell explained how teachers were matched to students in elementary school. Mrs. Dampier talked about clusters with experienced teachers and additional assistance. Dr. Rendell explained that with FOCUS, teachers had access to student information 24-hours a day. Board Member spoke on need for properly-trained aides for ESE students. Dr. Rendell said that they would do a report for the Board on ESE. Board Member encouraged other Board Members to occasionally visit an ESE or cluster classroom. Vice Chairman Frost said that there was language in the last Legislative Session that required Boards to visit school sites.

III. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Frost reported on the Economic Development Council Meeting.

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

A. Elementary School Report Cards

Dr. Rendell said that the District had shifted back to traditional-based grades for students in grades K-5.

Citizen spoke on the FSA Handbook and need for teacher assistants for ESE students.

V. ADJOURNMENT – Vice Chairman Frost

Discussion adjourned at approximately 2:33 p.m.