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Homework Policy 6306

The second review of the Homework Policy included the recommendations made by the School Board Members from the February 13, 2008 workshop. The School Board Members wanted to go over this policy one more time before input from the community and then go to a School Board meeting for approval.

It was recommended adding *digital tools* to the **Teachers Shall** section, which is on **page 2, item d.** This will now read, *coordinate projects so that all students have access to research and resource materials including textbooks and digital tools such as flash drive, electronic textbooks and websites.*

A concern of School Board Members is for students to be able to retrieve their homework assignments. One suggestion and a goal of the School Board is for a teacher to have a webpage where homework assignments would be posted. A survey will be done across the district to see how many teachers do have a webpage. Schools must have the proper tools for this to occur.

Principals are directed each year to address this with their teachers and to make sure that they have the essential tools to accomplish this. It is dependent upon the Principal to execute technology within their schools. It is directed by the School Board to put into the guidelines of the Homework Policy that it is the School District's goal that every teacher have a webpage and all homework assignments would be listed at these sites. It was also noted that school websites are not regularly updated and requested that this should be done for up to date communication with our parents, teachers and students.

The School Board Members recommended gathering input on this policy from the schools, parents and community. If the schools, parents and community do not agree with the policy it would come back to a workshop to continue the discussion. If everyone concerned agrees with the revisions the policy would come before the Board for a first reading.

The Looping Process to be used: The District Advisory Council will place the Homework Policy on their meeting agenda and a presentation will be made to the area chairs, who will disseminate to their area groups, who would share with the parent chairs. That feedback would go back to the area chairs and then go to the District Advisory and then back to the School Board Members.

When the policy comes to the Board for its first reading the guidelines for this policy will also be provided. Once approved the policy and guidelines will be posted on the School Board's policy Website.

Guidance Counselors

The primary goal of the School Counseling Program is to promote and enhance student learning. The comprehensive School Counseling Program integrates academic, career, and personal/social development. The counselor conducts a personal and private interaction with a student in which they work together on a problem or topic of interest. A face-to-face, one on one meeting with a

counselor provides a student maximum privacy in which to freely explore ideas, feelings, and behaviors. There are many other duties that Guidance has to do; such as meeting with families and making sure that the students' basic needs are met. A strong Guidance Program yields research based results, such as:

- Improved graduation and promotion rates
- Better attendance
- Fewer discipline problems
- Higher test scores
- More individual student planning and goal setting
- Fewer failed courses

Guidance Counselors are an extremely valuable resource for students in our schools. The annual guidance plan is based upon American Schools Counselor Association standards, which is web based and Principal supported and will be tied to BEEP.

In 2003 a survey was done to determine how much time Guidance Counselor's spent on non-guidance activities. At the elementary level, 52% of the Guidance Counselors time was spent on non-guidance activities. The Middle school level, 33% and high School level, 16% of time were spent on non-guidance activities. Samples of non-guidance activities range from test coordination; bus, hall and cafeteria duty; health screening; filling in for teachers; clinic duty; discipline; clerical record keeping; and immunization compliance.

A memo was sent out to Principals last year requesting minimizing the non-counselors jobs. Other school employees would have to be assigned to these jobs. Some schools have done a wonderful job realigning. Staff will be collecting this information and will pass on best practices to other schools to help with realigning their schools. Further considerations identify revisions to the budget guidelines to enhance guidance implementation at the school level to address the inequities across the district in regard to supplements. The Superintendent with his Executive Leadership Staff will drill down and look at the big picture of support services that are offered, which include Social Workers, Family Counselors and Psychologists. Another study is recommended to be done using national and state benchmarks to determine what can be done right away to help Guidance Counselors do what they do best. The School District will continue ensuring adequate professional development, developing a standardized Guidance Curriculum (BEEP) and completing standardized course registration program (Virtual Counselor.)

The complete Guidance Counselor presentation can be found on the eAgenda under the March 11, 2008 Retreat.

The Magnet Feasibility Study

The School Board gave direction to do a Magnet Feasibility study for Plantation High School. The topics in the study included Policy 5004, criteria for capacity and program design; enrollment and student data; theme considerations; funding and the next steps and recommendations.

Several years ago South Plantation started a Magnet program and it did take enrollment from Plantation High School. Placing a Magnet program at Plantation will not hurt South Plantation and Nova because they are over enrolled. Plantation at this time is under enrolled and would like to improve its image to draw students back.

There are two types of Magnet school models. OPTIONS Schools which are 95% under enrolled, needing innovative programs that can be replicated and provide transportation for out of boundary students. CHANGE Schools have decreasing enrollment, theme based which is

marketed to boundary students and does not provide transportation. Plantation High School qualifies for a CHANGE Magnet program.

Three themes were considered for Plantation High School: Aerospace Technology and Design Program; International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program and Diploma Program; and Center for Literary Arts. The International Baccalaureate Program, which is a rigorous academic program, is the program Board Members, parents and the community requested.

The School Board approved going forward with the IB program at Plantation High School and will begin implementing this program in the Fall of 2008. The Board recommended offering more Magnet programs across the District, which would help keep students in their neighborhoods and cut the cost of transportation.

It is an exciting time that the School Board, with the support of the Area Superintendents, staff, Mayor of Plantation, parents and the community, is in unity during these tough budget times and going forward with the prime directive of this district - student achievement.

Restructuring and the Impact on the District

Under the NCLB law, schools that are designated as Title I schools that do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for five years, come under what the Federal Government calls restructuring. In Broward County, only Title 1 middle and elementary schools are included in this process. The state required A++ Plan also requires a process similar to restructuring under the School Improvement Process. Schools that do not make progress in the state goals and are not Title 1 schools are included in this process. This would include our struggling high schools.

Restructuring does not necessarily equal a failing school. Broward County has schools that have consistently earned A grades from the state that are still designated as not meeting AYP under Federal guidelines. They may have subgroups with as few as 30 students that have not made AYP yet. The main purpose of restructuring is to make every effort to bring all subgroups up to grade level standards. NCLB School Restructuring is a progressive process of school support.

We have premier programs such as DETA, G.L.I.D.E.S., Smart Classroom, reading programs and many options for schools. Board Members recommend schools under restructuring should have these programs.

The School District must wait until after July 14th, the predicted date for the AYP data to come from the Federal government, to determine which schools must continue to offer NCLB Choice for the 2008-2009 school year.

Budget Update

Board Members had a conference call with the School District's lobbyist, Georgia Slack. The following is that message.

The anticipated revenue for this year is another \$900 million down from what originally was projected and was announced today. The State has already cut \$1.6 billion from this year's budget (07-08.) The latest loss will most likely come from further cuts this year.

This means that going into the new school year, 2008-09, the state is short \$2.6 billion it had to cut from the first two reductions and an additional \$1 billion. That totals a \$3.6 billion shortfall going into next year.

School districts are anticipating a beginning budget for next year that will be at the same level as the current budget after it has been cut twice (2006-07 base.) School districts will probably receive some money for Class Size Reduction, because that is a constitutional mandate that has to be funded, but for nothing else. There is Class Size modification bill that is being discussed, which would allow Class Size to be calculated on a school wide level for the next 2 years. This bill will be closely monitored. A middle school representative on class size will be sent up to Tallahassee to speak for the District on Class Size.

From the diminished beginning budget for next year, we will have to pay increased costs of utilities and supplies all of which cost more because of the increased costs of fuel which are passed on to us by the vendors who have to pay more to get their goods to market.

That leaves no money for just about anything else. With continued declining enrollment in some districts, (Broward is declining currently, but Miami-Dade has started to grow again) the funding situation is not good and there appears to be no legislative sentiment for increased taxes of any kind. Bills that have a financial impact on the state do not have much hope of becoming law this year.

Organizational Chart 2008-2009

Originally the Superintendent stated, because of the funding situation, he would cut the organizational chart by \$2 million. After reviewing the Organizational Chart, the Superintendent recommended cutting \$4 million, which targeted 34 frozen vacant positions and 9 eliminated positions, including total salary and fringe costs. The Superintendent reviewed the 2008-09 chart, with the Board Members, which contained a number of title changes all with the underlying objective of sharpening the focus of staff resources towards supporting Broward County school district's mission of meeting the education needs of all students in a safe and enriching learning environment.

The Superintendent decreased the span of control in two divisions: Curriculum and Operations. The Curriculum and Instruction Student Support was divided into two divisions, Curriculum and Educational Programs & Student Support. The Educational Programs and Support Division combine those departments, which provide programmatic data support to the schools to ensure accuracy and alignment, A++/NCLB. This will provide support to improving schools effectiveness and the federal state accountability framework. There is a name change for Community Involvement. It is now Parents, Business and Community Partnerships. The Chief of Operations officer has a new position titled Administrative Assistant. This will be a selected Principal who will for one year be assigned responsibilities to work on assigned projects by this department. The persons who will come into the school to fill the Principal's position will be a Principal Intern position.

Board Members thought that the Charter Schools Department should be moved from the North Central Area office. It was not decided where this department would possibly be moved. This would make the area offices responsibilities more balanced. It was also suggested that the Charter Schools department should have an attorney. Expulsions, which are also located at this North Central Area office, were suggested to be moved. It was suggested that Expulsions be moved to the SIU Department.

Once the final revisions are made to the Organizational Chart, it will be brought to the Board for approval. The 2008-09 Chart, with memorandum to the board listing changes, can be found on the eAgenda at the March 11, 2008 retreat site.

JFN/jd

