

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

**JAMES F. NOTTER
SUPERINTENDENT**

Telephone (754) 321-2600

Facsimile: (754) 321-2701

**School Board Workshop
April 13, 2010**

Letter to the Governor Regarding SB6

A letter to the Governor expressing opposition to SB 6 was provided to the School Board Members for their review. In consort with the School District's approved Legislative Platform, the School District absolutely opposes unfunded and partially funded mandates. SB 6 impact on the School District employees is great and takes away local control of public schools, School Board, Administrators, parents, and the community. Board Members approved the letter and requested that it be immediately hand delivered to the Governor. The Board agreed that this is the right time to send this letter and stated that the State Legislators should be more aware of how our the School District feels about this bill. The School Board is very concerned about the direction that the State is going and those who support this bill.

Board Members requested the Superintendent to give them an analysis of SB 6 and its impact to the School District. It will cost the School District millions to develop the thousand end of course tests that this bill requires. Board Members are allowed to contact the Governor personally if they so choose.

UPDATE: Governor Crist vetoed SB 6 on April 15th.

Deerfield Beach Middle Parent Forum

A Parent forum, with over 150 people attending, was held at Deerfield Beach Middle School to discuss security procedures and safety prevention programs. The Deerfield Chamber of Commerce attended and announced the Walk for Josie as a vehicle to raise money for the therapy that will be needed after her release from the hospital.

2010-2011 Student Advisors to the School Board

The new student advisors were introduced to the School Board Members.

Student Advisor to the School Board - Maria Rincon from Pompano Beach High School.

Assistant Advisor to the School Board - Graham Rabinowitsch from McFatter Technical High School.

The School Board Members welcomed the new Student Advisors for 2010-2011 School Year.

District Education Technology Plan (DETP) 2010-2013

The District Education Technology Plan has been developed to ensure that Broward's technology initiatives continue to support student achievement, objectives for instructional and information technology programs, operational efficiency, and is aligned with the District's mission, vision and goals.

The following funding streams are contingent on the adoption of the DETP, which must be in place by June 30, 2010.

- E-Rate Funding.

- Federal NCLB: Title II-D Enhancing Education through Technology Grant Program.

- Other forthcoming grant initiatives that require technology components.

The Goals of the DETP are aligned to the State and National Education Technology Plan with strategies to meet the challenges. The DETP and explanation of all the goals can be found in the material posted on the eAgenda, April 13th workshop. Appendix A to the DETP is a cross reference guide that links the State and Federal Planning criteria to the 2010-2013 DETP.

The DETP was developed with input from a forty-five member committee comprised of representative stakeholders from schools and departments across the district and community.

Staff reviewed the factors considered in the plan's development, the District's technology vision & mission, and the plan's goals.

Next, staff discussed the challenges for the School District, such as: equity across the district, 24/7 access, digital divide, refreshing of laptops, maintaining service with reduction of staff, funding /budget reductions.

One of the goals is the integration of all data systems, which is the key to better allocation of resources, greater management efficiency, and online technology based assessment of student performance.

Communication to all stakeholders is another goal. Every school needs to have a communication plan internal and external. Board Members expressed that every school must have an E-newsletter to keep the parents and community up-to-date on school information and projects. The recent ethics committee meetings had a common theme that parents did not feel they had enough communication from schools and the School District to keep current on what is going on. It was suggested to have a link on the Broward Schools web site on a how to navigate the site. That would be very helpful to parents.

Also suggested was the wider use of robo call to communicate to parents instead of sending home flyers. The Superintendent is requested to inform area offices and schools to utilize robo calls. Training for parents on computer usage is being done through innovation zones so everyone can be a digital native.

Video conferencing equipment is in every school. The Board requested that this equipment be utilized. Also, other programs like Ichat and Oovoo should be looked into for further utilization.

Board Members want to make sure that all schools are utilizing all programs that have been purchased. They want to ensure that teachers are being trained to use these programs and are integrating them into the classroom. Training can be done on-line, so teachers are not taken out of the classroom. The Board requests that Principals ensuring that teachers are implementing what they have learned.

Board Member spoke about the Melinda Gates Foundation Grant. Staff is requested to give Board Members an update on that grant.

One of the School District's biggest challenges is the lack of funding for out of warranty and maintenance of technology equipment. It was requested that $\frac{1}{4}$ of the technology funding go to refreshing school technology. It is requested that staff bring forward this budget item to a future budget discussion.

The Board requested that staff take the technology plan and presentation to the Broward Workshop and Broward Alliance and believes they would be shocked to hear of the lack of funds to refresh computers and laptops and that software licenses are expiring.

Board Members thought the DETP is a thorough, complete, and flexible plan and commended staff on their great work. Technology gives you a great return on your investment in the classroom and on the business side of the District.

Material for this presentation is available on the eAgenda April 13, 2010 workshop.

Audit of the Physical Plant Operations (PPO) Division

The Office of the Chief Auditor performed an audit, in accordance with the 2008-09 Audit Plan, of the PPO Division to review its operations.

It was determined that purchasing practices and administration of the contracts that were issued require strengthened internal control and compliance with all applicable purchasing rules.

There are eleven detailed audit observations/recommendations. Five observations/recommendations were associated with purchasing and administering compliance. The audit determined that there was a flaw in the RFP No 23-182N, which was awarded to the partnership of Grau & Company and the Portolan Group. (Grau/Portolan). This flawed process cost the District more than was originally proposed.

Six observations/recommendations were associated with operational and efficiency issues within the PPO Division with a potential saving of 2.5 million if implemented. Of the eleven observations/recommendations, four management responses require follow-up responses from the Office of the Chief Auditor. This report was presented to the Audit Committee on December 11, 2008 and to the School at the February 3, 2009 meeting.

The audit was performed over a period of four years, which resulted in a reorganization of the Maintenance Department, currently called the Physical Plant Operations (PPO). There are many proactive programs that have been initiated since the audit and the PPO Division was launched, which have resulted in savings to the department.

The recommendation from staff to purchase a GPS System for their employees was discussed. With this type of system, travel time to projects can be reduced locating shortest routes to jobs across the district, which results in less fuel and more time on the job. There are cell phones that now have this service and will be looked into by staff.

This investment would achieve increased productivity and save dollars for the department. It would not be hard dollars saved for the School District. It's difficult for the Board to make

the decision to go ahead with this investment when there is no hard dollar return. When money becomes available, it would be appropriate to purchase a tracking system.

The Board was very pleased with the new recommended format of this report, which shows a real collaborative relationship between staff and the Board. This thorough report also gives the Board and the public a greater confidence with the audit report.

Budget/Legislative Updates

The budget staff came before the School Board with the latest information on the education budget from the Senate and the House, which is still being discussed. FTE dollars, (per student dollars) are projected to be reduced by \$19 per student. There are no additional funds for the expected 3,000 Haitian students expected to be enrolled in the fall. Categorical funding was reviewed, such as: reading allocation, instructional material, science lab, and student transportation, to name a few. These funds have again been reduced. Both the Senate and the House at this point have a reduced budget from last year.

Included in the funding from the State is the assumption that School Districts will use their super majority vote to increase local taxes by .25%. Not only is the state expected to again lower funding, as they have done for the past three years, they are also adding into their funding the .25% increase in local taxes so it looks like it came from them. The School Board was shocked to see this type of funding maneuvering.

Class Size funding has not increased. The Class Size Amendment referendum will be voted on in November. This would keep class size to the total number students enrolled in a school rather than class-by-class. In the event that this does not pass, the State expects School Districts to plan for class by class for the fall of 2010. 750 additional teachers will be needed. If the referendum passes, the 750 new teachers will no longer be needed. This would also affect school schedules, which would have to be redone. It is requested by the Board to do a special employment contract for this period of time. The cost is approximately \$55 million. Again, no extra dollars to hire teachers. Board Members were quick to say that it is very contradictory of the State to reduce funding, thus there will have to be layoffs and in the same breath tell schools they will have to plan for class by class, thus having to hire teachers.

Staff then reviewed the past three years of funding from the State. Each year, since 2007-08, the State has reduced the budget and has had mid year holdbacks. A mid year holdback is when the state asks for some of its funding back. In 2008, \$34 million was given back to the state; 2008-09, \$96 million was given back to the State; and in 2010, \$6 million was given back. A total of \$135 million dollars had to be returned to the state.

Due to these mid year holdbacks from the State, the School District has had to dip into their one time funding and workers compensation funds. This has added to the already needed funding for schools and employees.

The School Board asked the Superintendent his plan for the budget. The Superintendent stated departments would cut their budgets by 12%. Schools are asked to cut their budgets by 6%. Board Members are worried that schools will cut art, PE and/or music in order to meet this obligation, and are unsure of their role in these decisions. It is the Principal, school employees, and community that make that decision. Even though the Board has told the Superintendent their feelings on what should be cut at a school, it is ultimately the schools', area offices' and Superintendent's decision. The budget is the Superintendent's

responsibility and he must have a balanced budget by the end of August. Board Members would like to know what every school is cutting and requested that the Superintendent bring this information to them when available.

Board Members are feeling helpless because they are not being consulted regarding the budget cuts. Because they are not consulted, they do not know how to respond to their constituents. They would like the Superintendent to come back to them and let them know the general parameters proposed to the schools in order for them to make the hard decisions. Board Members want to make sure the Superintendent has gone under every rock before schools get cut. The Chair stated that the Board has to trust staff to make the right decisions.

The Superintendent brought forward the discussion regarding the financial impact of a one-day to one-week furlough, going through each bargaining unit, and how that would save the School District dollars. All unions, without the Teacher Union, a one day furlough would save the school district \$1,539,807. A one day furlough with just the teachers would save the district \$4,806, 020. That totals to over \$6. 3 million if all employees agree to a one-day furlough next school year. If there were a 3-day furlough the district would save over \$19 million.

The Superintendent stated that as of now the Broward Teachers Union, which represents about 14,000 educators, rejects the idea. It is the only one of the District's 11 representative groups that opposes the idea to save dollars. At this time, the School Board has declared an impasse on contract negotiations due to their request for a 4% raise. Hopefully the desire to save jobs will prevail in future union discussions.

Board Members have many suggestions to save dollars and have met with budget staff to voice their concerns and recommendations. Staff is requested to make individual appointments with the Board Members to further discuss their concerns and recommendations. The Chair suggested that Board Members prioritize their requests.

Other Board Members' suggestions to save dollars:

- Shorten school administrators' calendars. The Superintendent stated the month before school starts the administrators are there to open and close schools. They are also covering administrators on vacation. It was suggested instead of covering a school, to close the school during summer months. Employees, such as custodians and clerical, can be relocated to other locations during that time. It is something to consider rather than losing a special teacher.

- Substitute days; see what is contractual and what is not.

- Eliminating Magnet transportation.

Board Members would like to see how much money could be saved doing the above items.

Board Members reviewed the latest passed legislation.

- Senate Bill 4 – New high school graduation requirements

- No Career Pay

- Vouchers to Private Schools

- Children Services - do not have to come back for a public referendum

- Pension Structure - \$150 dollars for health care stays

A Town Hall meeting to discuss the budget with the community is scheduled for April 19th from 6 pm-8 pm. Parents, students, and the general public are invited to join the School Board Members and the Superintendent in an informative and cordial discussion on how State education funding cuts are impacting public education in Broward County. The Town Hall meeting will be held at the KCW Administration Building with three additional teleconferenced sites: Monarch High, Plantation High and McArthur High Schools. The Town Hall meeting will also be broadcast live on BECON Television Channel 19 and live video streamed on the School District web site www.browardschools.com.

JFN:jd