

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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**School Board Workshop
May 13, 2008**

Anti-Bullying Policy

The State has recently passed legislation that school districts in Florida will have an Anti-Bullying policy by December 1, 2008. Broward County will have an approved policy in place by the Fall of this coming school year. Again Broward County is ahead of the curve and will be used as a model for other counties. The Anti-Bullying Policy includes all the different scenarios that could occur and how to handle them such as: student-to-student, adult to student and adult-to-adult.

The history of this policy was presented to the School Board Members.

-May 2006 - Broward County Safe Community Initiative (SCI) initiated, through Children Service Council, to address issues of bullying and violence in Broward County.

-August 2007 - Leadership of SCI was transferred to Amalio Nieves as Co-Chair with Kids in Distress. (Planning for a community-wide prevention conference started.)

-September 2007-February 2008 - Continued planning for the countywide prevention conference, included bullying preventions and bullying policy components.

-Parent motions passed at the District Advisory Council requesting the Board to take a strategic approach to the bullying issue.

-Board Members took a proactive stance and directed the Superintendent to create the Anti- Bullying Task Force, which was convened in March 2008.

-The proposed Anti-Bullying policy was finalized for today's workshop, May 13, 2008.

A Procedural Manual will accompany this policy, which will include procedures for efficient and effective implementation for schools, areas and district levels. The Subcommittee, which will consist of school and area/district level staff, will draft the Procedural Manual.

The Board Members discussed how a bullying incident would be tracked and went over the listed definitions: Bullying, Harassment, Cyberstalking, Cyberbullying, which will all have discipline consequences and are stated in the policy.

Upon receiving a complaint, regarding one of the above bullying acts, the appropriate administration will document and input information in a database. A brief definition of bullying is the unwanted, purposeful, repeated behavior, intended to cause harm, which interferes with an individual's school or work performance. A complete definition can be found in the policy. Training of school personnel on this policy will be the key to properly implement to protect students, teachers, and administration.

The School Board Members wanted to make it very clear that cyberbullying is absolutely not tolerated and will be enforced. Complaints can be sent to the School District's Special Investigative Unit, and if found dangerous to the safety a student, teacher, principal/staff and/or school, the Secret Service will be contacted for their help. E-mails can be traced quite successfully and they will be able to track back to the person who is using this venue. Hot lines will be available to place an anonymous complaint or tip. Procedures for making a complaint will be in the Procedural Manual and will also be clarified in the Student Code of Conduct for 2009-10 regarding email, texting, using sites such as My Space and Facebook and what is construed as cyberbullying with disciplinary consequences. There will be a parental sign off form in the Student Code of Conduct to make sure parents are aware of these disciplinary consequences.

Also discussed were incidences, which occur off campus, such as bus stops or enroute to school or home. If there is a police charge placed against the student, the School District does have the authority to suspend the student. School Board Members will discuss this further in the future.

Bullying has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment, which may cause long-term damage, may interfere with the individual's school performance or participation, and is often characterized by an imbalance of power. This will not be tolerated in Broward County Public Schools. The School Board thanks the Anti-Bullying Task Force with the help of Co-chair Shelly Heller, parent and staff, for their outstanding work creating this policy. The complete presentation can be found on the eAgenda, May13, 2008, workshop.

Citizens Concerned For Our Children (CCC) Education Settlement Agreement Orientation

The CCC presentation, *Retrospective: Looking Back to Move Forward*, was given by Mary and Chris Fertig. Also in attendance were many of the original people involved in the CCC settlement. The presentation gave the history of what led to the final CCC settlement agreement. There were inequities in the school system regarding textbooks, curriculum, computers, athletics, kitchens, water fountains, restrooms, discipline, libraries, to name a few. The complete presentation can be found on the eAgenda, May13, 2008 workshop. The School Board Members asked "Where are we today? Have these issues been fixed?" Not all issues have been resolved, but many have. The main issue today is establishing equity throughout Broward County in all schools East, West, South, and North. All schools must have the same educational tools in order for each student to receive the best and equal education.

The School Board requested that there be a continual discussion and update to make sure that the needs of all students are met and that equity prevails throughout the School District. What the Board Members would like is an update taking the existing pictures in this presentation and match up new pictures showing what the situation is today. A before and after presentation, so we all know what is happening now.

The Diversity Committee monitors the nine conditions of the CCC Settlement Agreement. The committee conducts school site visits to monitor the nine conditions.. Reports are made which are presented to the Board on a yearly basis.

It is suggested by the Board to consider having a second committee, which would be concerned with equity issues. The original Diversity committee would be concerned with Diversity issues. This will be discussed at the May 27, 2008 workshop.

The Superintendent recommended the next steps to identify where we are and where we want to go:

- Update this material with current photos showing what exists today.
- Create a matrix listing the different site issues, what is needed to correct each issue, what was or was not done specifically to correct it, and the date of actions.
- Bring this information to a workshop in September to update the School Board.
- Semi-annual reports will be made to update the School Board.

All those in attendance felt this was a very productive meeting and a great step forward regarding what we can do to improve equity in all Broward County Schools.

District Educational Facilities Plan

The Capital Budget Staff presented to the School Board Members the status of the existing Five-Year Plan. Due to Florida's economic downturn, which has resulted in lower growth in property tax values than the State originally anticipated, Amendment 1, which lowered the growth in property values even more, and the recent 0.25 mill "a millage swap" resulted in less capital outlay funds available to support the District Educational facilities Plan. The total loss to Broward County School District is \$560 million dollars.

Staff requested the Board to approve revising the debt structure to 55%, which would provide more bonding capacity. At this time the District Educational Facilities Plan percent of Millage for Debt Service is 50%. This leaves the District approximately \$300 million short to balance the 5-year plan after making significant cuts. At 55% the District is \$14 million short of balancing the 5-year plan (with significant cuts.) At 60% the School District could balance the plan, but would run a significant risk of having our bond ratings downgraded.

Staff did go through the existing 5-year plan, closed out completed projects, and any left over monies were put back into the capital budget. The 5-Year Capital Plan not only is the funding for building/renovating schools, it is also the funding for bus transportation, vehicle maintenance, and technology.

School Board Members will be meeting with staff to go over their projects in the 5-year plan. Priorities such as safety, ADA compliance, CCC Report and security must be considered first when deciding which projects can go ahead.

Charter School Task Force

The purpose of the Charter School Task Force is to address the challenges associated with the ever-increasing number of charter schools in Broward County such as programmatic, operational, legislative and financial specific to charter school issues. There will be a total of 64 charter schools in Broward County this school year, 2008-09. The Charter School Task Force will also make recommendations to the School Board, which will promote excellence in Broward County charter schools. This task force will act as a liaison between the community and the School Board and provide a forum for individual schools, which have a common interest or issue.

The Board Members requested further training for the task force to include the history of the Charter School Task Force, the initial purpose of this task force, update on legislative issues concerning charter schools and the School Boards' expected outcomes of this task force.

School Board Members request that the Charter School Task Force:

- Take a look at all aspects of the Charter Schools of Excellence and what are the pros and cons in these issues.
- Collect Charter School contract and pre-approval processes from other Florida School Districts to compare our contract and approval process to theirs.
- Take a look at successful charter schools and find out what makes a better school and what the costs are.
- Find out if charter schools are following legislation on what a charter school should be doing.
- Develop a focus group to find common ground between public schools and charter schools.

The School Board will continue meeting with the Charter School Task Force for updates on the above-mentioned requests.

JFN:jd