

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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**School Board Workshop
July 28, 2009**

Superintendent's Evaluation

The Superintendent began the workshop session with a few opening remarks regarding his evaluation and stated that he appreciates this quality evaluation process. No other Superintendent has this type comprehensive review that reaches out to eight focus groups, which includes the community, businesses, Executive Leadership Team, labor/union groups, non-instructional, parents, principals and teachers. After reviewing the evaluation remarks, the Superintendent stated a common theme rang throughout. A quality internal and external communication plan is needed. If the District had a better plan, perhaps some of the issues raised would not be raised. That is why this evaluation, with all the input from the Board and focus groups, is an outstanding check and balance plan. The Superintendent thanked the Board for continuing this type of process. This is the Superintendent's 3rd evaluation.

Dr. William Mathis, Mathis Consulting Group, facilitated the Superintendent's evaluation. Dr. Mathis stated that this past year the Board worked very hard during this budget crisis time. Dr. Mathis gave the Chair an enormous amount of credit on how the Board made huge strides during such hard times.

Dr. Mathis stated that the Superintendent and Board should take care to note the signals throughout the evaluation, which speak to the future of the District and pointed out three major themes/issues that need to be resolved.

1. Communication and messaging. There should be a positive, not defensive, message given out. Creative thinking is needed to go forward.
2. Resolving the struggle between the union, teachers and the School District.
3. The Superintendent must continue to reach out to the School District and community. There is a "new normal" and that phrase should be defined to acknowledge the kind of environment we are in.

Dr. Mathis gave a brief review of the comments made by the focus groups.

-Businesses are requesting to become partners with the School District to give more support.

-Many of the focus groups think the Board Members are working too hard and micromanaging. They should rise to a higher level and trust staff to handle their concerns.

-There is a cloud over the Board and Superintendent regarding ethics and this continues to be a drain on the District.

-Employees feel that their increased roles cannot be maintained and there is a fear of not being able to do a proper job.

-There needs to be more appreciation of employees. Saying you have a job is not enough. Employees are working hard and need to be acknowledged.

-Resolution to the long-standing problems with the Teachers' Union.

- Town Hall Meetings were disappointing. It was more of a defensive, whose fault meeting, rather than offering solutions regarding the budget.
- There needs to be a long-range plan to face future challenges.

Dr. Mathis highlighted the Board's comments.

- New Board Members need a better method of being brought up to date on what they need to know regarding the School District and their role.
- Information is needed more quickly regarding crisis situations.
- Board Members would like more personal contact with the Superintendent to have an opportunity to exchange creative ideas.
- Workshops should be continued. Board Members would like to discuss having the workshops televised so the community would know exactly how items are being reviewed.
- A blog or twitter should be done to notify the community that School Board meetings and workshop summaries are posted to the Broward Schools' website and eAgenda when appropriate.
- Board Members pointed out that if their policies were implemented as directed they would not have to micromanage.
- Board Members would like to have a Board Training Retreat to discuss the fine line between micromanaging and staying at a higher level.
- The Superintendent is visible with schools and community, but some parent groups are not getting his attention.
- The Board realizes the budget is critical, but there should be more focus on the people of the District rather than what the budget is.
- Spending too much time on the budget issues rather than solutions.
- Public relations is not effective. A better job of marketing the School District still needs to be done. More emphasis on the positive so that the School District can continue to attract and keep students.
- Technology is the solution to downsizing and must be used to the fullest degree.

In general, the Superintendent was given a favorable evaluation. The Board maintains a high degree of confidence in him after completing a very turbulent year. Board Members each gave a summary of their evaluation of the Superintendent. The following are some of those remarks.

- The Board felt that the work they do on policies is not being implemented at the school level. Homework was given as an example. Some schools and teachers do what they want disregarding what was directed. The Board feels there is a continued disconnect between the Central Office, to the Area Offices, and then to the schools.
- The procedure used for the revision of the SIU policy should be duplicated for other policies.
- The procedure used to revamp the ESE department should be duplicated for other departments when needed.
- The BTU relationship must be resolved. The Board suggested going over the BTU recommendations with the union representatives and the School Board Members in a public forum so responses to their suggestions can be discussed.
- A new Communications Plan is needed to rebuild the image of the School District and get the message out to the community regarding what we are doing. Use technology to convey the message and use different websites, such as Broward Alliance to convey the message.
- There is a lack of outreach to cities. The Superintendent, Board Members, and staff should meet with the municipalities regarding different issues and to share information.
- We have to do the best we can with what we have and must make people accountable.

- We need positive leadership at the schools to keep morale up and move forward.
- There needs to be a better job done to educate the public on the role of the Board.
- One unethical situation has painted the entire Board in a bad light and this is unfair for the entire Board. This has been an extremely hurtful distraction and has hurt the cohesiveness of Team Broward.
- Get in front of issues using blogs, Twitter and Facebook, as the newspaper does. The District needs to act, not react
- The Budget situation took the Superintendent away from the school districts issues. Need to get back to core values and what is good for kids.
- Concerns regarding students having books and FCAT preparation for students who already passed FCAT.
- Continue to monitor excess usage of electricity at our schools, making sure playground lights are turned off when not in use.
- An unbiased look by an outside professional to see if the District is top heavy or is understaffed.
- A quicker response time to the Board. Responses should be comprehensive rather than minimal.
- Committees should be reviewed to see if they are needed, if they should meet every month, or if they should be tweaked.
- Next year's evaluation should include a student focus group.

In summary, the Board felt the focus group's comments reflected misconceptions and some good advice and felt that a lot of the comments were directed to the Board even though it is the Superintendent's evaluation. This has been a very heavy year with supreme distractions. The Board does feel the business side is running efficiently, but is worried if the School District can respond as quickly as they have done in the past due to less staff. The School District must continue to look at all new programs and innovative ideas across the nation to continue making our schools more competitive to attract and keep students.

The Superintendent made closing remarks saying he values this evaluation process, feels it is a comprehensive, well balanced review, and appreciates having the opportunity to go over and talk about the evaluation with the Board Members.

The complete Superintendent's evaluation can be found on the eAgenda July 28, 2010 workshop.

JFN:jd