



Board of Trustees Meeting

Monday, September 20, 2021 – Lake Wales High School (Auditorium)

4:00pm – Agenda

You can also join us via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81750534018?pwd=YnNaOE55UndkN3Y3UUZPYnZ4bXBnZz09>

Meeting ID: 817 5053 4018

Passcode: g3MwZV

Those Present: Danny Gill - Chair, David Fisher – Vice-Chair, Marcus Kirby, Paul Gerrard, Chayla Outing, Tonya Stewart, Alricky Smith, Marie Cherrington-Gray, Marcia Rose, Donna Dunson, Rebecca Thomas, Anna Barcenas, Me’Lisa Williams, Julio Acevedo, Angela Heyward, Anuj Saran, Kaleigh McCoy, Stacie Padgett Zoom: Elizabeth Tyler, Mellissa Ard, Aundrea Croft, Blake Fann Cheryl Pitts, Julie Unzueta, Kin Griffiths, Shay Hixenbaugh, Jennifer Barrow, Donna Drisdorn

Guests: Robin Gibson, Chevon Baccus, Keith Thompson, Lindsey Seay, Dr. Bill Vogel (FSBA), Andrea Messina (FSBA), Rob Quam, Angela Pulido, Keith Wadsworth, Al Goldstein, Matt Simpson

- I. CALL TO ORDER** **Danny Gill, Chair**
The meeting was called to order at 4:17pm.

- II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** **Pastor Matt Simpson**
The invocation and pledge was done by Pastor Matt Simpson.

- III. FINANCIAL REPORT** **Alricky Smith, Superintendent/CFO**
 - A. Monthly Financials**
Request approval of the Monthly Financials as presented to the Board on September 16, 2021. Motion to approve was made by Vice-Chair David Fisher and seconded by Trustee Paul Gerrard. Motion approved unanimously.
 - B. Personnel Changes**
Request approval of the Personnel Changes as presented to the Board on September 16, 2021. Motion to approve was made by Trustee Paul Gerrard and seconded by Trustee Tonya Stewart. Motion approved unanimously.

- IV. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT** **Alricky Smith, Superintendent/CFO**
 - A. COVID NUMBERS**
Superintendent Smith asked Nurse Rose to update us on the Covid #'s. She reviewed the numbers with us and answered any questions that were asked.
 - B. THE RIGHT TO KNOW LETTER**
Request Board approval of the Right to Know Letter presented on September 16, 2021 at the Board Work Session. Motion to approve was made by Vice-Chair David Fisher and seconded by Trustee Marcus Kirby. Motion approved unanimously.
 - C. MINUTES: August 19, 2021 BOARD OF TRUSTEES WORK SESSION AND MEETINGS on August 6, 2021 / August 23, 2021**
Request Board approval for the Board of Trustees Work Session and Meeting Minutes as presented at the September 16, 2021 Board Work Session.

Motion to approve was made by Trustee Tonya Stewart and seconded by Trustee Marcus Kirby. Motion approved unanimously.

D. NEXT BOARD WORK SESSION/FINANCE MEETING AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

The October Board of Trustee Work Session/Finance Meeting/Board Meeting is **Monday, October 25, 2021 at Lake Wales High School**. The Work Session/Finance Meeting begins at **4:00pm** and the Board Meeting begins at **5:30pm**.

15 minute break – we will start the meeting at 5:00pm since this is what was posted to the public.

Chair Danny Gill comments: Our last meeting from community input we made the decision to suspend the national search for a few weeks. The chair of the search committee asked if it would affect or hinder anything other than the timeline? The Chair's response was, we work at the discretion of the board and the pause would not affect the committee in any way. Any negative response would have halted the discussion beyond that point. This action was never intended to halt, decommission or stop this committee in any way. Unfortunately, incorrect information was circulated which caused a lot of uncertainty and confusion. The action was only intended for the search committee to advertise the process, receive applications and see if we had any viable candidates to move forward in an interview. If not, the national search continued. It has come to my attention that this action was looked at unfavorably by some for various reasons. As the Board chair I take full responsibility for the actions and also take full responsibility for any consequences attached to it. I am trying to right the ship and make sure that we follow what we need to do after receiving a large amount of community input. We value your input greatly. It makes us very happy to know that you care enough about your children to voice your opinion. Agree, or disagree we value your opinion no matter what it is.

V. FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION (FSBA) Andrea Messina

Andrea Messina: We appreciate being asked back and we take the responsibility of helping you with your search very seriously. We recognize that the most important decision that the Board of Trustee will make is who the leader of this organization will be. We want to make sure this search is conducted completely above reproach and with the fidelity that your community expects. We'll discuss your options and take directions from the board. We have done the pre-search interview with the Board; in July we worked through a timeline; we developed a search portal which is on your website; August we advertised the forums, and launched an online survey and also conducted several input sessions. We will ask **Dr. Vogel** at this time to review where we are with the information from some of the input sessions. Mr. Reichert and I were here on several occasions. Thanks to Angela Heyward, Donna Dunson, David Waldrop for their assistance. He shared his lockdown story at the high school while they were there. We did three forums, students, community and leaders. Ms. Messina and Dr. Vogel responded to questions from the Trustees. Trustee Marcus Kirby shared his thoughts on the last Board meeting and shared that he regretted that he made the decision and not consider the search committee or get their input to make the best decision for the Board. **Vice Chair Fisher:** I think we should continue the National Search. The Succession Planning Committee policy is to do a national search. **Trustee Chayla Outing:** I was not there, but since we already started the process we need to

continue. It appears as if we are not on the same page and I think we should continue the nationwide search. **Trustee Marcus Kirby:** Will we continue the national search? **Chair Gill:** Let's move on to the public comments and then come back to make the motion. **Ms. Messina** shared her thoughts on the process and the direction she needs from the Board to move forward. She also talked about the two open seats and that the process will be fair and above reproach and what are the next steps as we move forward. **Chair Gill** asked Ms. Messina to outline the role of the Board as it relates to the search committee. **Ms. Messina** shared the role of the two entities and the Board decides the role of the committee based on what decisions were to be made by the Board and by the Search Committee. This was mapped out under Dr. Hall's leadership that the Board wanted the decision making in regards to the qualifications, the salary and the committee bring them a group of finalists. The input and the structure will be left up to the committee. **Dr. Vogel:** The Search committee will also have a zoom meeting with their semi-finalist recommendations before they make it to the Board. **Chair Gill:** Is this in a written template? **Ms. Messina:** Have you guys received the timeline we have provided 5 reiterations. Dr. Hall was the conduit so we assumed you received this information. **Chair Gill:** My thoughts with us having two open seats... I think we need to fill the seats before we move forward. I would feel uncomfortable without having these seats filled. The SACS/PTO's were asked for names. **Trustee Kirby:** The Board Selection Committee I am the chair and we should have these members by October 25th. Also, going back to what was said earlier... I feel awful about the emails about the Superintendent Search and that folks want what's right in our community. He shared his thoughts on the emails received. **Superintendent Smith:** Once we get the two new Board members how far back do we go with some of the decisions the previous Board has made? Will the Board members need to revisit some of the items like the job description, time, schedule? **Ms. Messina:** We will need to have some conversations with the new Board members and some that came over the summer as well. We will have to bring them up to speed and change the timeline. **Dr. Vogel:** I think you have had some great community input and we can do this to bring everyone up to speed. **Trustee Tonya Stewart:** I hope none of the current Board plan to leave anytime soon. I certainly don't plan to. Let's hope if someone else leave we don't continue to push the timeline back. **Ms. Messina:** At some point all the Board members agree then we need to make sure the Board is moving in the same direction. **Trustee Paul Gerrard:** We have time. Alricky is doing a great job and we have some time right now. **Ms. Messina:** It is far better to have waited than to have advertised and change things, we will lose interest and applicants. Its far better to do it on the front end. **Chair Gill:** Most serve on other Board where you can talk things out. We can't talk unless we are here so let's talk about it. **Trustee Kirby:** My regret is making the decision and not consider the search committee and get more information from them to make the best decision and we should rescind the motion to postpone the search and go back to the national search. **Vice-Chair David Fisher:** I agree with Mr. Kirby we might have done it in a little bit of haste. Let's do it national and not undermine the decision. Andy, Dr. Hall and I were on the Succession Planning Committee and its the policy of this Board to conduct a national search. **Trustee Chayla Outing:** I think since we have already begun the process it might be in bad taste to change it. We should continue the nationwide search.

VI. SCHEDULED PERSON'S ADDRESSING THE BOARD (2 minutes please)

Search Committee Chair - Al Goldstein: I am disappointed our direction over the last few weeks is gone in the wrong direction. Mr. Goldstein also thanked Alricky

Smith for doing a super job. He had a few questions regarding the yellow sheets and the cards used at the forums.

Angela Pulido: Search Committee - Parent of a LWHS student, former Trustee, Attorney and involved community member for the last 26 years. I hope my words assist... she shared her thoughts on dispensing best practices as it relates to the Superintendent Search Committee.

Rob Quam: Search Committee / Community supporter – shared his thoughts on the Superintendent Search Committee and the appearance of favoritism during the Superintendent Search.

Lindsey Seay: Shared her thoughts on the mask/non-mask in schools and the Superintendent Search.

Ellyne Draper: Shared her thoughts on supporting a nationwide search and this meeting being later in the day so staff, parents and students can attend. She also shared her thoughts on the lack of transparency, the academic concerns at Bok South, the Barrow lawsuit, the outside meetings, the lack of cultural diversity on the Board, the underhanded dealings on the Superintendent Search etc.

Keith Thompson: He shared his thoughts on the National/Local search.

Kelsey Savi: She shared her thoughts as an educator on the Covid policy not being flexible for the teachers; The secrecy of the Superintendent Search and the fear teachers have and they are not speaking out.

Howard Kay: Shared his thoughts as a former Board member and how proud he was of his time on the Board. He shared his thoughts on doing a nationwide search. He also mentioned closing the gap between the teachers and the Board by going out to the schools every month and let the teachers and the students see the Trustees.

Principal Donna Dunson: I am not retiring, just leaving this job at the end of the year. We believed in Robin Gibson's words of being valued as educators. She shared her thoughts on hidden agendas, politics and remain hopeful for our Board members. It's about the children in this community and they'll be future doctors, lawyers etc.

Lauren Crumbliss: Thank you for the meeting time. She shared her thoughts on 2003 Lake Wales schools and she wants us to consider the national search.

Nicole Sealey: National search is imperative. She shared her thoughts on the meeting times and the Board visiting our campuses and asking our educators for their input.

John Motis: He shared his thoughts on his meeting with the Search Committee previously and being assured the local and national candidate would be presented.

Andrea Jahna: Shared her thoughts on the Search being national and local and not limiting ourselves. Please reinstate the nationwide search.

Hannah Taylor: Thanked the Board for their time and shared her thoughts on gathering the unity between ourselves and putting the children at the forefront.

Al Goldstein: Shared his thoughts on accountability and moving forward with the search. He also asked search committee members to come back to the committee.

Michelle Moses: So proud to be a part of our community and the parents that came out today. She shared her thoughts on Dr. Damien Moses and Donna Dunson and their presence being a great part of our community. She also shared her thoughts on the candidates having K-12 experience at the very minimum.

Wendy Merson: Shared her thoughts on her support for the national search. She also shared her thoughts on the trust issue and being transparent and repairing the trust.

Chair Danny Gill: We'll continue where we left off, would anyone like to make a motion?

Trustee Marcus Kirby: Motion to reinstate the National Search. **Seconded by Vice-Chair David Fisher.**

Trustee Tonya Stewart: I appreciate everyone coming out and being a part of this process and I have taken all of this to heart. At our last meeting I made the motion to do the local search because I felt like that is what the community wanted. It is never our intent to cause any rift and I felt today there was some rift. I never doubted our concern as a community and I appreciate all of this today and I will vote to continue the national search and I am sorry. I am sorry.

Trustee Paul Gerrard: When we talked about the national search I was concerned about our local candidates being vetted the same way. We also have principals, administrators, etc. that aspire to be Superintendent.

Vice-Chair David Fisher: This is our opportunity to talk as a Board and we should also consider not just the reinstatement of the national search but also where do we go from here? This is our opportunity to talk.

Trustee Marcus Kirby: I would like to apologize to the committee because some feelings were hurt. My heart is in this and the Board have three new members and please give us a chance to restore the unity. Don't charge us with anything else other than what you guys see moving forward.

Chair Danny Gill: We have a motion on the floor, do we have any other questions?

Trustee Marcus Kirby: To the FSBA, how do we get back on track since we've taken a few weeks off?

Dr. Vogel – FSBA: We would just adjust our timeline and still be able to complete the search as requested before the Christmas holidays.

Andrea Messina: We do want the Board to review the job description, qualifications etc. and that the Board agrees before we put anything out.

Chair Danny Gill: Motion on the floor and seconded– revert the local search and reinstate the national search. Motion approved unanimously.

Discussion with Board and FSBA regarding how they would like to move forward.

Chair Gill asked that the Board and the Search Committee lines of communication be tightened up and they work together more as we move forward. If we have to do joint meeting then that's what we will do together.

Robin Gibson: I would like to thank folks for their kind comments of me over the past 17 years. I read the work product that came out of this process and it is excellent. I would like to thank the speaker that mentioned the mission – I wrote that mission. He shared his thoughts on us being big on our community and the mission being the key to what we do. Our system is decentralized to bring as much as possible to the classroom. The magic happens in the classroom!

VII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Danny Gill, Chair

None

VIII. TRUSTEES REPORTS

None

IX. OTHER BUSINESS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Trustee Marcus Kirby: What about the staffing at each school – are they up to par, staffing needs etc.? **Superintendent Smith:** My HR Director can address your question.

Julio Acevedo: We currently have about 17 positions, most are support and not classroom teachers. We have a few starting this week. We also have Bok South principal opening and we are getting ready to post the High School principal position because Principal Dunson is retiring next year.

X. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Marie Cherrington-Gray, Corporate Secretary

Board Approved: _____

