



Board of Trustees Work Session & Finance Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Lake Wales High School - Media Center

(Trustees, Principals etc.)

Agenda - 8:00am - *Social Distancing*

Please join us via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85787866848?pwd=MGZYb1JaL1BGedhWdm9aQVBvQ1QyQT09>

Meeting ID: 857 8786 6848

Passcode: aMD4Yj

Trustees Present: Chair Dr. Andy Oguntola, Vice Chair Danny Gill, David Fisher, Becky Gaston, Paul Gerard (zoom) Jennifer Simpson, Dr. Greg Hall, Howard Kay

Staff Present: Interim Superintendent - Alricky Smith, Marie Cherrington-Gray, Elizabeth Tyler, Donna Dunson, Dr. Linda Ray, Jennifer Barrow, Gail Quam, Damien Moses, Donna Drisdorn, Angela Heyward, Dr. Julio Acevedo, Marcia Rose, Dr. Barbara Jones, Stacie Padgett, Julie Unzueta, Renee Moore, David Waldrop, Aundrea Croft, Kim Griffiths, Cheryl Pitts, Rebecca Thomas, Roxanne Anderson, Me'Lisa Williams, April Barnhardt

Others Present: Robin Gibson, Andrea Messina

I. CALL TO ORDER Alricky Smith, Interim, Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 8:05am

Special Guest regarding Board Training – Florida School Board Association – Ms. Andrea Messina, Executive Director. We work with all elected school boards throughout the state of FL. We've worked with Charter Schools on training. We've assisted with their structure and the Governance arena for the past 90 years now across the state. We listen to the needs and develop a training to meet their needs. Our goal is to deliver services to make public schools stronger and higher functioning.

Trustee Hall asked about the content. Ms. Messina – we will have multiple sessions personalized to your needs. For example – FEFP Training – 1 ½ days. I would say we need quarterly meetings, etc.

Trustee Paul Gerrard – I would welcome the opportunity for this training.

Trustee Gaston – I welcome the training and I need the training.

Vice Chair Gill – I welcome it and we cannot afford to not do the training.

Trustee Kay – when do we start, this should have been years ago.

Ms. Messina – it will require commitment from the Trustees.

Chair Oguntola – Interim Superintendent Smith & Marie work with Ms. Messina on the dates, cost etc.

Vice Chair Gill – in the past our Annual Retreat was an all day event and well put together. I would encourage we make them powerful and impactful.

II. FINANCIAL REPORT Alricky Smith, CFO

A. Monthly Financials

CFO Alricky Smith shared the monthly financials and the personnel report which will be presented for your review and approval at the Board Meeting on February 22, 2021. Our General Counsel bill was discussed in detail as requested by the Board.

The Chair will give the CFO the approval to move forward and pay the bill as we move forward. Principal Tyler asked who pays for this bill. CFO Smith – if the request was done for the location the location pays if it is directly related to that school. If it is a system issue it is charged to the Board as an expenditure. Trustee Gerrard – We have one of the best attorney in that state of FL. Chair Oguntola – mentioned meeting with Babson Park AP and not Hillcrest. Do we get charged for Superintendent search regarding a conversation with Mr. Updike? CFO Smith – if the Board approves the activity we'll take care of it. Trustee Gaston – thanks to Robin for reducing this bill by 50%. Teacher deposition? Robin Gibson – this happen often with the schools. A injury outside of school that impacts the child's school work. The teacher get a deposition and they are alarmed and nervous o they contact me to get assurance etc. regarding the deposition. This is kept to a phone call v me going to the deposition with the teacher etc.

B. Personnel Change

CFO Alricky Smith shared the Personnel Change report which will be presented for your review and approval at the Board Meeting on February 22, 2021.

III. SUPERINTENDENT & COUNSEL EVALUATIONS Dr. Julio Acevedo, HR Mgr.
Chair Oguntola and Dr. Acevedo discussed the evaluations and provided several different types with the Trustees.

IV. ONBOARDING & HIRING POLICY Dr. Julio Acevedo, HR Mgr.
Dr. Acevedo discussed the on-boarding & hiring policy with the Trustees. Background screening will be completed before hiring in all positions. We'll also take a look at our employee handbook and bring that current. Trustee Kay: I would like something that mentions no employee will start working until we get a clear background check. Trustee Gaston: Also have a stipulation that any deliberate omission are grounds for dismissal. Vice Chair Gill: I agree with Howard... until we get full clearance no one should be working. How about the state requirement for positions regarding certifications required by the State of FL? Dr. Acevedo: Criteria for all public schools etc. for all teachers are the same regarding their certifications. Vice Chair Gill: What about Principals and AP's? Is it the same criteria? Dr. Acevedo: Same criteria for them. All administrators certified? Dr. Acevedo? Yes except for Principal Dunson. Principal Dunson: I am not certified in the State of FL. When I was hired here it was approved. I went the private school route and you can compare my experience with any current Principal. In the state of FL you do not have to have your typical certification which is the law. Many states do not have this as a qualification. In charter we have more flexibility for example ex-military and business folks that are in these positions also. I was hired at the inception of this charter and we are all aware and my work stands for itself. However, if this Board wants me to back out I am fine to do so right now. I hope this Board figures this out and there are nasty things being said publicly about people. I would just like to have a year to rebuild our school. If this Board does not get its act together you won't have educators that will want to work with the lack of trust that is here. If you would like that I am fine to leave right now. Vice Chair Gill: I am just asking if we have policies. Principal Dunson: Danny you have been on the Board for a long time and you have known this. Vice Chair Gill: I am just asking about procedures. Chair Oguntola: Let's take deep breaths... Principal Dunson – you have been a great leader and your work speaks for itself. We are not asking you to leave, and this Board cannot make personnel decisions, that is the decision of the Superintendent. This Board cannot dictate what happens on a day to day basis, this is the Superintendent's responsibility. We have a lot going on during Covid etc. We must lead by example, this has to cease with us. This is a free position and what we will not do is not mess this system up, I won't stand for it! If we have to revamp and if I have to walk away then so be it. Emotions are running too high... we have to get these policies fixed and train.

I value all Principals and I only have one vote and we should do right every time we vote and stop the nonsense. Trustee Gerrard: Andy I agree, I think we should spend this time getting better and move forward. I don't think any policy or procedure should affect our current outstanding employees. For all of our Principals this is not our intent. We have a great thing going, let's keep it going. Principal Quam: I have learned more from Principal Dunson than my education degree. She has taught me more over the years than any degree. Principal Tyler: Every October and every February the Board gets the report if we are out of field or not. Superintendent Smith: As we move forward all questions should be directed to the Superintendent's office and I welcome the opportunity to work on your concerns as it speaks to certification etc. as to grandfathered in etc. Let's move forward with consistency without offending anyone. Board please address the Superintendent and his staff with your questions etc. Chair Oguntola: As we move forward look at our policies and let's focus on the hiring policies. Safety of students is most important. Please bring the policies up to date and let's make sure we all work together. Principal Dunson: When this was started it was created to be different and minimize the bureaucracy over the years. We are in a transition time but I did hear that this was coming up. I appreciate your leadership. There are kids in this school that are being educated by the finest educators anywhere. We I came from in Ga they pay \$30,000-\$40,000 per year for their child. You are getting private school training in a public school. Let's move on! Chair Oguntola: For the record, no one is asking Principal Dunson to leave, this is not a Board decision. We have to find a way to remove the politics out of the school system! Please let's trust the process and let's fix this for the City of LW. I am vested and my kids are in this system. Please let's stop this at the next Board meeting. We want peace and the best system possible! Trustee Kay: Only one Board member that has information that we don't have, I think it was directed at me. Go visit the schools and you will be more informed and you won't have that knowledge if you don't visit the schools. We must let Principal Dunson know that we have her support and what she has accomplished she has not gotten enough credit for it! Chair Oguntola: This is community talk and this is a fractured area for folks. This has to stop. Mr. Robin Gibson: Our system is unconventional. We didn't want to repeat what others did by keeping the assets centralized and not getting them into the classroom. We have placed our assets in the classroom and this has paid off. I don't pay attention to the outside noise and all we have to do as a group is concentrate on our mission – bring the best in public education to the community and to our kids. That's all we do!

V. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Dr. Andy Oguntola, Chair

Chair Oguntola – Trustees how do we want to move forward? The floor is yours...

Trustee Fisher: We need training and outside expertise to fix a few things before we bring a new person on. Mr. Smith is good for right now as our interim. Trustee Gerrard: We don't want to be in a hurry to just hire anyone. Vice Chair Gill: The search committee has only done introductions. I am comfortable with Aricky and we move through this slowly and make this an attractive position and get ready to post etc. I would say January of next year and encourage the Board to lay out the timeline etc. Trustee Hall: The original succession planning committee suggested a national search. I think timeline should be set and we should share our vision with the search firm. Trustee Kay: I was involved in this at Vanguard so it is a process and we should take our time to research the search firm. Principal Tyler: Aricky already has a lot on his plate. Are we going to leave Rebecca as an interim until January? Chair Oguntola: I think the two permanent positions for Hillcrest and Polk Avenue should be for the next Superintendent to decide. Superintendent Smith: As a system we can't have eight different answers to concerns etc. We need certain protocol in place for consistency for the next few months before we get the next Superintendent.

VI. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT SALARY **Dr. Andy Oguntola, Chair**
Chair Oguntola – I have watched Mr. Smith doing double duty for a while now and I also know he is being paid too low. However, we’ll discuss it at a later time when we address the teacher salary at the same time. Please bring the teacher pay to the Board and the cost of living increase and your salary increase in the future. Not appropriate at this time without the teacher salary being addressed. Superintendent Smith: Due to the uncertainty of the budget we did do set asides for salaries. We’ll bring it forward for approval in March. The Governor’s teacher salary increase – we were waiting to see PCSB so we can be competitive. We might have to move forward with this or an alternative measure.

VII. LWCS BYLAWS DISCUSSION **Dr. Andy Oguntola, Chair**
No report – Mr. Gibson had to leave for another meeting.

VIII. ATTORNEY’S UPDATE **Robin Gibson, Attorney**
a. The Succession Planning Report - No report
b. Any Other Update – No report

IX. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT **Alricky Smith, Interim Superintendent**
A. MINUTES: November 16, 2020 BOARD OF TRUSTEES WORK SESSION AND MEETING / January 21, 2021 Work Session and January 25, 2021 Board Meeting.
Presented for your review and approval at the February 22, 2021 Board of Trustees Meeting.
B. NEXT MEETING DATE
The March Board of Trustees Work Session / Finance Meeting will be **Thursday, March 18, 2021** at 8:00am at Lake Wales High School (Media Center). The Board of Trustees Meeting will be on **Tuesday, March 30, 2021** at Lake Wales High School (Media Center). The Board Meeting will begin at 3:00 pm. Both meetings are in person for Trustees and Leadership; zoom for others due to social distancing.

X. OTHER BUSINESS FOR THE GOOD OF THE CAUSE

XI. ADJOURN
Meeting adjourned at 10:05am.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marie Cherrington-Gray, Corporate Secretary

Board Approved: _____