

**TEACHERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MAY 15, 2013**

**MINUTES**

**Tom Russell**, Area Superintendent opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The following members were present:

Susie Baldwin	Marsha Gering	Ann "Beth" Milliken	Mitzi Stevenson
Donah Bartleson	Cheryl Gherst	Laurel Moehring	Carol Sullo
Lynn Boyles	Leslie Hall	Juan Neira	Holly Ward
Jacqueline Bynum	Janna Hammond	Miriam Newman	Teresa Ward
Maria Cintron	Mary Hoffmann	Mike T. Peterson	Sheri Washuta
Christian Cisneros	Gabriele Hughes	Peter Policke	Nicole Wells
John Clark	Jerry Jackson, Jr.	Deborah Potee	Sherri L. Wiggins
Barbara Coleman	Dana Jacobsen	Eden Rhynehart	Donna Wilkes
Jan Consiglio	Deborah R. Johnson	Michelle Roun	Michelle Willard
Anthony Copelin	Vickie Kessler	Stacy Sampson	Margaret Williams
Jeanette DeLuca	Christina Lapnow	Wayne Sampson	Wendy Wilson
Barbara Diaz	Terri Lubas	Carol Sasek	Corrine Wilton
Valri Ford	Melissa Marple	Jennifer Scorza	
Virginia Freeman	Julissa Martinez-Fanith	Betty Smith	

**Dr. Smith**, Superintendent of Schools, addressed the following topics:

- ✓ **FUTURES Foundation** – They are focused to give support to teachers and students and the entire school system. Their fund-raising efforts provide funds to the schools (student recognition, mini-grants, etc.).
- ✓ **Budget** – There is good news coming out of Tallahassee and its impact on Volusia County Schools. Funding for Volusia County Schools increased by \$16.6 million; however, \$10.9 million is earmarked for increases in teacher (instructional) salaries, teacher lead and instructional materials. The remaining discretionary revenue to offset the budget deficit is \$5.7 million. With several other adjustments, including a 5% reduction in district departments, cost savings on health insurance, the salary lapse factor, savings in utilities and retirements, and fewer teachers needed to meet class size, the estimated budget deficit has been reduced to \$12.8 million. Other topics regarding the budget were address:
  - Teacher raise (\$2500) - Waiting on the DOE Technical Assistance Paper which will show the requirements needed to identify the individual and performance pay piece.
  - Recommendation made to the school board to outsource custodians
  - The next budget workshop is scheduled for June 11th. Additional information will be provided with options to balance the budget.
- ✓ **Senate Bill 1076** – This bill will be beneficial to the schools and our district. It provides a comprehensive K-20 career and education planning; substantially rewording the student assessment program for public schools and provides requirements for industry certifications.

The meeting was opened for questions and comments by the teachers:

- Are we the only county with the District Cost Differential (DCD)? ***Dr. Smith explained the state funding formula and stated of the 67 counties, Volusia County has lost \$97.5 million since 2004. She further discussed how hard the legislative delegation worked to get a special appropriation to offset the DCD; however, it did not pass in the House.***
- Besides custodians and reduction in health insurance, what other items are you looking at considering reducing? ***We have fund balances that the school board could use to help balance the budget, due to the savings from the hiring freeze and salary lapse.***

**STUDENT PROGRESSION PLAN:**

**Ms. Deb Drawdy**, Coordinator of Student Support Services; along with SSP Committee members: **Lyndi Goepfert**, Coordinator, K-5 Curriculum; **Katie Dyer**, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum and **Dr. Amy Hall**, Specialist, K-12 Guidance; shared district initiatives. They asked that members review the plan with their teachers and send any recommended changes to the appropriate staff members listed below. Senate Bill 1076 will result in a number of changes to the

Student Progression Plan for 2013-2014 and the SSP Committee members will be working diligently to make the changes in the SPP.

Elementary (Section I):	Ms. Lyndi Goepfert, Ext. 20670 <a href="mailto:lgoepfe@volusia.k12.fl.us">lgoepfe@volusia.k12.fl.us</a>
Middle & High (Sections II & III):	Dr. Katie Dyer, Ext. 20529 <a href="mailto:kdyer@volusia.k12.fl.us">kdyer@volusia.k12.fl.us</a>
Exceptional Student Education (Section IV)	Ms. Susan Reaves, Ext. 38151 <a href="mailto:sjreaves@volusia.k12.fl.us">sjreaves@volusia.k12.fl.us</a>
Monitoring & Student Progress (Section V)	Dr. Alicia Parker, Ext. 20650 <a href="mailto:akparker@volusia.k12.fl.us">akparker@volusia.k12.fl.us</a>

The following Q & A was distributed at the meeting:

**INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES:**

- **Academic Competitions:** With budget cuts that are being considered for next year, are academic competitions (e.g., Social Studies Fair, Math Counts, Model UN, Academic Team, etc) in jeopardy of being eliminated? *Per Bambi Lockman, Deputy Superintendent- We are doing everything we can not to impact academic competitions; the school board is committed to maintaining a focus on student achievement.*
- This year subject area contacts were alleviated from the elementary schools. As a result, we are receiving minimal information, if any. In February we learned that the DRA level had been changed to 6 for May instead of DRA4 in Kindergarten. Then this week a group of teachers were at an after school workshop and learned that new assessments were available on DOD to help with reading and math assessment this school year. Such good information should not be hidden or kept a secret. Please, could we get an organized voice touching all grade levels in elementary with important information in the multiple subject areas we teach? A short monthly newsletter with current topics or concerns would be most helpful. *Per Bambi Lockman - All of the information has been shared in a variety of ways: presented at both Principal and Assistant Principals meetings, sent in various Area Supt's Friday messages, and through ISTOAs.*

*This was sent to principals the week of November 16<sup>th</sup>. The DRA cover sheets were posted on DOD that week. We also presented the information to principals that month when presenting the new Curriculum Maps.*

**ELA DRA Guidance**

*The following documents are now available on DOD: Grade K DRA 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, Grade K DRA 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, Grade K DRA 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, Grade 1 DRA 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, Grade 1 DRA 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, Grade 1 DRA 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter*

- *To access the documents go to Copy Center, choose GRADE, Ela, DRA*

*After open discussion with principals and district staff, we stand by the original intent of the DRA to be used as a diagnostic assessment in Pinnacle Grade. Kindergarten and first grade teachers have other assessments that are used as formative assessments, such as: Letter Recognition and Sound, High Frequency Words, Graphic Organizers (Thinking Maps), Foldables, Learning Response Journals, etc. Refer to the Recommended Formative Assessments found in the ELA Curriculum Maps for additional ideas. In addition, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade also has twelve Unit Formative Assessments (2 per unit).*

**Formative Assessments**

*We began sending alerts to the new formative assessments through the principal email week of November 7<sup>th</sup>. We have sent updates to inform teachers many times as they became available.*

*The math assessment have always been on DOD. As the assessments were updated that information was shared with principals.*

- **CCSS** - Being that 40+ states will be using CCSS, I want to know if there is a resource that could be used regularly where students can practice standardized test - type questions since currently our textbook isn't aligned with the standards. *Per Bambi Lockman:*
  - *We are waiting for PARCC to produce more practice test items.*
    - *Because the CCSS are still relatively new and there have not been very many released items from PARCC, most states are encouraging districts to delay purchase of resources aligned to CCSS.*
    - *Delaying will allow a greater body of knowledge from which the publishers of these materials can draw to incorporate into their resources.*
  - *With Math, it is important that students still practice FCAT and/or EOC items during the 2013-2014 school year, since students will still be taking the FCAT and/or EOC in 2013-2014.*
  - *Currently, teachers need to focus on becoming as familiar as possible with the new CCSS and align their teaching practice to the new standards. As we learn more about reliable practice materials, we will communicate their availability and make recommendations.*
  - **Standards Based Grading** - How much money was wasted this past year on trying to implement standards based grading? I would like to know the number of employee hours spent on this system that was thrown to the wayside because that has a dollar figure attached to it as well. *Per Bambi Lockman - Standards-based instruction and grading isn't new. Teachers have been aligning their curriculum to Florida Standards for years and are now aligning to the more rigorous common core standards. Volusia started this alignment several years ago and is continuing to move in that direction, following the lead from prominent educational researchers. After receiving a US DOE Race to the Top grant through the state of Florida, Volusia has an opportunity to align systems to support high effect strategies that promote increased student achievement. The direction hasn't changed. Florida legislation and state mandates are still in place to move districts to align curriculum to standards and report to parents on the progress of those standards. Volusia has made a decision to focus on standards-based instruction next year and increase training and communication to help staff, parents and the community better understand the link between standards-based instruction and standards-based grading. The pilots that were put in place this year provided valuable information and resources to support education reform in the future. No funds were wasted. All systems are still in place, with training opportunities and resources being updated to include the best practices learned from the pilots put in place this year.*
  - **Computer Based Grading:** A computer science teacher expresses problems using computer based grading unless only one standard per assignment is graded. How can these kinds of problems be addressed for high school teachers, etc. Responses by Bambi Lockman -
    - What is being done to help make standards based grading less labor intensive? Most assignments contain more than one standard, so in order to use the system as I understand it, each portion that is a different standard is graded separately. So, for an assignment that measures two standards, we will be scoring twice and entering the grades twice for each student and double the workload. If an assignment measures four standards, the workload quadruples. If the assignment were a unit exam and measured 10 standards, for a class of 25, there would be 250 cells that we would need to fill into Pinnacle. For six high school classes of 25 students each, that would be 1500 cells to fill for one exam. This is a staggering and unwieldy amount of work. I truly hope that this problem is being worked on to make this a much easier process for both data entry and student/parent comprehension. Please don't roll this out without a MANAGEABLE plan for the additional work load. *Per Bambi Lockman - We appreciate your concern about the amount of time it takes to use the current system to enter grades by each standard. We definitely understood the experience of teachers this year who told us about the weight this added to their work loads, and it is our desire that teachers spend more time on instruction design and delivery than on grading entry.*
    - It is my understanding that the 80/20 essentially goes away next year replaced by grades that trend based upon how three or more grades within the same standard. It seems to throw averages and

percentages out the window to rely on the trending grades. How can the students and parents expect to have a grasp on their grades without knowing the trending algorithm? Who will explain it to us? *Per Bambi Lockman - The grading system for 2013-2014 will be based on Total Points, with a 60/40 weighting system for summative and formative categories, respectively. Communication tools have been provided to schools to help explain the Total Points grading system, and we appreciate the need to have a grading system that is easily understood by parents, students, and the community.*

- The Volusia grading policy states that 70% is proficient. My point is that currently when 2 quarter grades are averaged, the result would not be accurately showing proficiency. For example, an A and a F average to a C. But, technically by percentage, it could be 50% if the A and F were 100% and 0%. Of course, there are many examples where true proficiency would not be realized by the current method of showing semester averages. Why aren't semester grades averaged by percentages? *Per Bambi Lockman - We use the 4-point grading scale to average 2 quarter grades. If you compare the distance between the F and the D (0 to 1 on a 4-point scale, and 0 to 60 on a 100-point scale), it becomes clear how the 100-point scale presents a disadvantage because the scale is so heavily skewed to the F range. The 4-point grading scale also assists with the calculation of grades into GPAs. In cases where students score an A in the first semester and an F in the second semester, the teacher's authority to override the final average should be discussed with the principal to determine whether the student should be awarded the passing grade. Communication with parents about possible grade overrides is essential while it is still possible for students to correct the deficiencies.*
- When will teachers know all of the major decisions about grading, etc. that will impact them next year? This needs to happen before the end of this year. *Per Bambi Lockman - Teachers will know major decisions about the Grading System and revisions to the Grading Guidelines before June this year. We appreciate the feedback we have received from stakeholders this year about the need to provide information in advance of pre-planning and have worked diligently to get this information to you in a timely manner. It is our hope that teachers will communicate any questions to us before the end of the school year, so that we are able to provide the needed clarification during the summer.*
- **First Grade Math Interim Assessments** - First Grade Math Interim Assessments are not online in a timely manner. First grade had an issue with interpreting the standards and followed the curriculum map (which had an error). When we have the tests before we begin planning, we are better prepared to teach the lessons. The revised assessments need to be online prior to the beginning of instruction by at least two weeks. *Per Lyndi Goepfert, Coordinator, K-5 Curriculum - Since all of the math assessments are having to be re-written this year, our goal has been to release them the first week of the unit. This will not be an issue next year since the math assessments are already created and will be revised over the summer. Our goal for next year is to release them prior to the beginning of each unit.*

#### ➤ **Supply Lists-**

1. Why can't individual schools make up their own supply lists and have them approved by the principal? There are numerous items on there that are not used by grade levels such as spiral notebooks for 3rd grade in our school.
2. Can supply lists be narrowed down to grade levels once again? The primary teachers are overwhelmed with items they don't use, which we then send to the upper grades. However, we then purchase replacements or ask parents for donations. It seems to be more cost effective to ask for grade specific as opposed to generic.

Examples:

- Loose-leaf paper is not as necessary in primary grades
- Skinny pencils are given away and fat pencils are ordered
- Teachers prefer large erasers (size of a cracker) as opposed to pencil cap erasers
- Folders- teacher prefer plastic folders with prongs as opposed to any type of pocket folder
- Can we put hand sanitizer, tissues, baby wipes as suggested optional items on the supply list?

*Per Lyndi Goepfert - The approved supply list for 2013-2014 has been sent the schools and local businesses. Teachers can delete items from the list but should not add any items. Teachers who feel the need for "wish list" items should consult their principal on how to handle that properly.*

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES:**

**Danielson Rubrics** - Are there any plans on adjusting the Danielson rubrics to accommodate the varying developmental levels of students, specifically domain 3. Many of the distinguished examples are not developmentally appropriate for Kindergarteners therefore a Kindergarten teacher is punished due to the fact that it is impossible for her students to demonstrate those examples. It is like punishing a PE coach because a child in a wheelchair wasn't able to run in a relay or a blind child wasn't able to describe an illustration. I would be more than willing to help the district write developmentally appropriate and obtainable goals for the domains. *Per Dana Paige-Pender, Human Resources Specialist - We have no plans to change the rubric; however, we do plan to work with departments to provide guiding questions/look-for/indicators to address differences in job roles.*

#### **ESE SERVICES:**

➤ **Electronic Problem Solving Team Site**: Are they (whoever is in charge) going to make improvements to the EPST site so data can be submitted electronically and why do we have to do so many PST's if no changes come about after all the interventions and meeting occur? I think the criteria for when we need to complete one on a student should be stricter. *Per Mary Alice Myers, Coordinator School Psychological Services - The electronic Problem Solving Team (e-PST) site was designed so that teachers can enter data electronically. The submission of data electronically is an existing feature of the system. In addition to the ability to enter data electronically, the system enables educators to extrapolate data electronically on numerous variables (e.g., school attendance, medical concerns, report card, ODRs) from one location/form (i.e., e-PST 1).*

*Volusia County Schools and the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) are committed to addressing academic and behavioral deficits of students through systematic problem solving. Furthermore, the FLDOE communicates expectations that educators will find what works for students by implementing interventions and monitoring the effectiveness of those interventions. If the interventions are not addressing the needs of students, educators often decide to increase the frequency or duration of the intervention or to analyze the problem further to determine if in fact the intervention is matched to the correct problem. It should be noted that "problem solving" and "Problem Solving Team (meetings)" are not synonymous. Teachers often problem solve without attending PST meetings. However, if despite these efforts students do not improve or a disability is suspected, a Problem Solving Team meeting should convene in order to determine if an evaluation for Exceptional Student Education consideration is warranted and/or to provide the teacher with other interventions and strategies for the student. The Problem Solving Team manual (available on the district website) further describes the purpose of problem solving and PST and when the school's Problem Solving Team should be accessed.*

#### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

➤ **Course Offering Training**: What is on the horizon for our professional development training in the way of course offerings? Right now, the majority of classes are for reading endorsement, a science class, a math class, and then all the Charlotte Danielson stuff. Will there be more diversity of course offerings through the new PD360/Model format? *Per Karen Beattie, Staff Development Coordinator - The determination of professional development opportunities provided to VCS educators is the responsibility of district departments and schools. For example, the district math office may offer math centers PD, while a school may offer a PD on reading in the content area. The Office of Professional Development and Support facilitates all offerings in addition to the PD360 courses, reading endorsement, clinical education, Lesson Study and other district-wide priorities. A needs assessment survey will be sent to all teachers in May to assist in planning for the next school year. Additionally, schools will be using teacher and student data to develop their School Improvement Plan which includes each school's plan for offering professional development for their faculties.*

➤ **VSET**: "We are supposed to include academic achievement on our PDD. We cannot change our PDD after May 1<sup>st</sup>. Some teachers based their PDD on EOC results, mine was going to be based on second and last semester grades, and I'm sure some would base theirs on FCAT results." *Per Karen Beattie: The timeline of the VSET process*

*is in the VSET handbook. If someone has written a plan that depends on data that will not be available prior to May 1, they may modify the Deliberate Practice Plan in MyPGS.*

#### **TECHNOLOGY SERVICES:**

**Soft Phone** - Years ago, I would venture to say, at least 10...when the county first invested in VOIP (the big clunky phones that they recently replaced), it was announced that because of VOIP, teachers would receive mic-headsets to plug into their laptops, and then be able to access a phone program in order to make phone calls via their computers. Each teacher would then have a "virtual" phone in their rooms. Dr. Boulware indicated that this is referred to as a "soft phone". My question is...when we are EXPECTED to call 911 when there is an ARMED INTRUDER, and this is now a SAFETY issue, as well as an ACCESS-TO-PARENTS issue, why do we not have "soft phones" to use in this day and age? I know I might as well ask why we don't have "other" technologies as well, but I would like to go with this one because it was already brought to the county's attention, and it now involves safety. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** I had previously submitted TAC questions gathered from the faculty, but this one came across today (I think in response to the new "Red 2" emergency code for weapon possession). After talking with this teacher, it sounds like Mr. Russell and Dr. Boulware had been approached before with regards to "soft phones," in which teachers without phones in their classroom can still make calls via their computers – whether as part of our emergency procedures or calling parents. *Per Don Boulware, Executive Director of Technology Services - Our budget limitations have not permitted the purchase and deployment of a soft phone model. In addition, we have to continually manage bandwidth and with increasing requirements, such as computer-based testing and newer digital requirements, space on the network is limited. If resources improve, we will certainly look more closely at soft phones. Classrooms have call buttons in place so that each teacher can reach out for help, and schools have security plans to be followed in the case of any emergency. Please check with your schools' contact for security procedures.*

#### **FINANCIAL SERVICES:**

What is the proposal for class size for the 2013-2014 school year? *Per Robert Moll, Deputy Superintendent for Finance: Based on the report made to the school board on class size, we should be adding over 100 core teachers next year in order to begin addressing the compliance issue. It is important to remember that we used 2012-13 student data. Student data for 2013-14 could obviously be very different from projections and class compliance is a precise class by class measurement. Needless to say, it is the district's initial intent to meet class size in 2013-14. Compliance is not measured by the state until the October 2013 FTE survey.*

#### **COMMUNITY INFORMATION:**

**Calendar:** Why do we have a different calendar every year - start and end dates? *Per Nancy Wait, Director of Community Information - The school calendar is recommended by a committee of teachers, administrators, parents, students and community members to the superintendent and school board for adoption. Florida law states school districts cannot start the first day of school for students any earlier than 14 days prior to Labor Day. Historically, we have started as early as the state allows. The last day of school is becoming more driven by the testing calendar.*

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

**Senior Timeline:** In past years, more time was given between senior exams and graduation, which helped seniors have some buffer time to make up/complete certain assignments, projects, etc. before grades were finalized for graduation. Is this timeline set by the district? Will more time be given between the last day for seniors and graduation? *Per Kati Dyer, Coordinator, 6-12 Curriculum & School Improvement - The senior timeline varies slightly from year to year and is dependent on two variables: Ocean Center availability and the state's policy on instructional seat time requirements per course. The report card processing calendar is adjusted for seniors in order to meet the graduation timeline but still allow students as much time as possible to complete their learning requirements.*

**School Way Café:** How much money do we save recycling the lunch trays? It's time consuming and unpleasant for those teachers and custodians responsible for collecting and stacking the trays. Will the new custodial staff be willing to do this yucky job and is it worth the money we save? *Per Joan Young, Director of School Way Café - We are saving around \$30,000 a year on bags and also saving money on trash pickup. Trash pickup is where the greatest savings occurs but we don't have an exact figure at the time the Q & A was printed.*

**The following question came in after the Q & A was printed:**

**District Assessments** - I am concerned that the windows for District Assessments do not close. Our team has followed the curriculum map and tested when it is scheduled. We have recently discovered that the testing windows do not close. There are teachers at other schools that are not testing as per the curriculum map, therefore they have more time to work with students on a topic. If our evaluations are going to be tied to students' success on tests then we think the playing field should be the same for all participants. Also, some teachers are giving the District tests more than once. They give it for a diagnosis purpose then give it for a final score. This means the students have already seen the test, had an opportunity to practice the concepts, then are tested. How is this fair? *Per Alicia Parker, Assistant Director, Program Accountability - We do not close the district interim windows to allow for some flexibility with students who are absent, long term substitute situations and other issues related to extending time for some groups of students. We ask that all administrators and teachers exercise professionalism in adhering to the curriculum maps and district testing protocols. Teacher evaluations are not linked through Value Added to any of our district interims. The data is to be used at the school level for ongoing progress monitoring and evaluation of instructional strategies. If schools are using strategies to inflate the interim test scores either by pre-tests, or re-tests, this practice does not aid the school in using the data as formative information to guide instruction.*

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.