SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION 2018-2019

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

STANDARD 1: VISION, CULTURE & INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

BURNS: There is no denying with the state of Florida has a teacher shortage. This is due to many underlying factors including the lack of teacher pay. Florida schools are becoming chronically underfunded and teachers are underpaid. Given this environment, the superintendent and staff are making progress toward finding and keeping the best teachers for our students. The superintendent is fiscally responsible and informed of the needs of the district. We are working collaboratively toward changing Florida law to allow for future increases in funding which could be put towards salaries and schools.

DODD: The beauty of the common vision of teaching and learning is the combination of its simplicity and its consistency. We see that it is working, and therefore we continue to stay the course. Rather than chasing new initiatives every year, the superintendent and her staff continue to build capacity around reading, writing, thinking, and talking in every lesson while teachers continue to be evaluated on just six impactful evaluation elements.

We have begun to see the resource landscape take shape. Rolling out a sustainable technology plan has been a struggle for this district in the past. The Chromebooks strive for a 1:1 ratio and have been implemented successfully thus far. As implementation becomes more widespread, I will be interested in seeing how teachers and students leverage the technology as an effective learning tool.

The superintendent navigated a somewhat controversial shift from Accelerated Reader with poise. Rather than rely on a computer program that asks shallow multiple choice questions, the district is building a more robust reading block infused with book conferences. Promoting a love of reading is one of the most important things we can do. The district has implemented more opportunities for students to interact with authentic texts and allowing students to have a choice in their selection. Struggling readers now have more support with the addition of Leveled Literacy Intervention.

Math is our greatest opportunity for a review of the existing resources. While our elementary ELA scores are on the cusp of being in the upper quartile of the state, math ranks around the middle. While we do have challenges associated with our anticipation of new standards, we must also take a closer look at the math block, professional development opportunities, and curriculum resources available to teachers.

The work to develop Lake Success Academy and the PASS program should be commended. These two opportunities aim to provide students the support they need while no longer coming at the expense of academic support.

GAMBLE: NONE
LUKE: *Strong team, clear vision established – continuing the work of embedding as a part of the culture of the district. Monitoring programs, after iReady fail 18-19 school year what are recommendations for the triangulation of data this year?

The District initiatives are still centered around Reading, Writing, Thinking & Talking. However, the new inclusion of planning documents & expectations around requirements are a continued work in progress.

MATHIAS: The Superintendent has shown a commitment to improving schools by making some hard leadership decisions. PASS and the new Lake Success Academy are examples of her vision to ensure the needs of all students are being met.

STANDARD 2: OPERATIONS, RESOURCE & PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

BURNS: NONE

DODD: Implementation of the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Act was unequivocally one of the most challenging set of state regulations to implement. Not only was funding extremely limited, but the initiatives to be implemented are complex. The district sought and received additional funding stream through a property tax millage. The superintendent negotiated many agreements with municipalities for law enforcement. Furthermore, the district has developed an extensive mental health plan to identify students and help them get the assistance they need.

Funding has always been a challenge in Lake County and there is a clear struggle to address all of the competing priorities. Financial recovery has taken a little longer than I expected, however we are not getting much help from the state or relief from rising health insurance costs. Our financial condition ratio ranked at the bottom of the 67 Florida school districts last year. Had the superintendent not led the charge to reduce district operating expenses by $7 million over the last two years, our financial outlook would be even more grim. Unfortunately, we have grabbed all the low-hanging fruit, and additional budget cuts would threaten to sacrifice the quality of instructional delivery and services critical to meet the needs of students. Furthermore, additional revenue to the district often comes in the form of restricted money that cannot be used to address priorities such as increased salaries. I believe controlling healthcare costs is the critical next step in our road to a stronger financial position and would like the district to prioritize those efforts.

From a budget approval standpoint, it is challenging to approve pieces without a full understanding of their effects on other segments. The staffing plan, for example, commits the board to some priorities without knowing if they will come at the expense of other priorities until the proposed budget for the general fund is assembled.

GAMBLE: NONE

LUKE: *Hurricane Preparedness

*Safety plan & continued negotiations with city & county officials for contracts with SRO’s and City Police Officers, implementation of Guidance Counselors, Mental Health Specialists, Nurses,
and partnerships with many organizations to meet students' needs. Continues to refine expectations & procedures based on FLDOE Rule. Would like to see the comprehensive budget planning as we've not experienced, somehow, within the confines of timeframe with legislation.

*Would like to see HS Teaching Academy expanded and utilized as recruitment tool it could be. The additional of dual enrollment within this program would beneficial

*Great strides made in tools to recruit teachers. Data drilled down to levels that help inform decisions/policies/etc. is appreciated and will help with the "message".

**Opportunities for program review & evaluation will present themselves this year with creation of new positions and opportunities. This process needs to be defined now, so we know how we will evaluate the effectiveness of a program/position and will have the capacity to make effective decisions when considering the 20-21 school year. Looking back at my 2018 Evaluation I stated, “EE 1.1 I would like to see something in regards to the new positions created recently and how we will ensure their necessity for student achievement. This would include school and district positions that were created for the 2018-2019 school year. How will we ensure those positions are a vital role in student achievement and aren't better utilized elsewhere? I would like to see that defined.” I still feel like this is something that could be more explicit and allow room for decision making surrounding new positions, especially this year with the creation of the new student services and the millage dollars.

MATHIAS: While all of this work is a team effort, the Superintendent has surrounded herself with great people. The high expectations she has set for each member of the team is clearly evident.

STANDARD 3: BOARD GOVERNANCE & POLICY

BURNS: NONE

DODD: The superintendent and her staff maintain an extremely positive working relationship with board members. They are easily accessible and quick to provide board members with requested information. They also operate under a premise that all board members should have the same information. When a board member requests data, it is typically distributed to all board members.

Work with NEOLA on the school district's policies continues to be ongoing, although some departments have completed their drafts. Finalizing this project should be a priority in the coming year.

GAMBLE: NONE

LUKE: Diane is methodical and regularly makes concise recommendations based on staff and board member input. She works to maintain positive relationships based on mutual respect.

MATHIAS: I am proud to be a member of this Board who, with the Superintendent, governs in the best interest of the children.
STANDARD 4: COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

BURNS: The superintendent excels at communication with board members, staff and public. Additionally, she has started district spotlights that highlight the fantastic work being done within the schools. She also has used her, and others, collaborative skills to bring multiple vocational programs to our high schools through community partnerships which will be a great value to our children and the greater community.

DODD: Restrictions of schools’ abilities to leverage social media resources were lifted and I believe this move has helped parents become more informed. Schools are better equipped to promote their students’ success and highlight programs that previously flew under the public’s radar.

The superintendent continues to showcase her commitment to strong partnerships. We have seen so many solid partnerships originate from the Leesburg High School Construction Academy. Additionally, the superintendent maintains a great relationship with Lake County’s legislative delegation.

GAMBLE: NONE

LUKE: *Expansion of HS Construction Academy, AICE Cambridge programs throughout the district

**Dancing with the Stars Mirror Ball Winner** - and visible staff support at that venue.

Collaboration with cities and Sheriff to include Resource Officers or city police officers at each school and maintain contracts that are fair for the community partners and the district. Her engagement with the Education Foundation and her relationship with local legislators have proven to be a strength for the district.

MATHIAS: The Superintendent is visible throughout the county, attending numerous meetings and events as the representative of Lake County Schools. The relationship she has built with members of the local Commercial Contractor’s Association has had a direct impact on the success of the Construction Academy at LHS. She also has a positive relationship with members of our legislative delegation which has resulted in two education appropriations and needed changes to state statutes.

STANDARD 5: ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

BURNS: NONE

DODD: Cultivating positive relationships are undoubtedly a significant strength of the superintendent. She projects a very positive image throughout the community. Feedback I receive from citizens continues to be excellent.

GAMBLE: NONE
LUKE: *Strength for Superintendent* she promotes positive relationships & a strong image of the district

MATHIAS: The Superintendent has a working relationship with other community leaders and organizations and has worked to establish mutually beneficial partnerships. Her continued support worked with the LCSO and other municipalities to provide security for all school campuses and her work with outside agencies to increase awareness and supports for students in crisis are examples of her strong interpersonal skills she continues to maintain an open line of communication with staff through her teacher focus groups.

**ANNUAL SUPERINTENDENT'S STUDENT PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

**BURNS:** NONE

**DODD:** # 1: The district has two more A-rated schools this year over last. Even though the district has fewer B-rated schools this year, we cannot ignore the fact that the district’s overall performance increased. Nine schools’ missed the mark for a B by just one percentage point. Just as we want to see a district filled with A and B schools, we want to see a district without D or F schools. Last year, two schools were rated a D, but this year, one school dropped to an F. However, that school is one percentage point from a D.

# 2: Graduation rates are largely considered the ultimate success of a school district. Graduation is the culmination of a student’s K-12 journey. All eight high schools delivered increases in their graduation rates, and the district is expecting its second consecutive significant increase.

#3: The district has further expanded advanced opportunities for students in a number of ways. Pre-AP programs aim to give students the foundation they need to be successful in AP classes, which we also hope will lead to higher pass rates on AP exams. Leesburg High School has seen increased enrollment in AICE and a thriving construction academy. Meanwhile, academies are expanding with a construction program at Eustis and a finance program at Lake Minneola. Increases in the number of students earning industry certifications is evidence of students that are more prepared to enter the workforce with relevant job skills.

# 4: The district has made great strides to reduce the number of retained students, recognizing retention is not the most sound educational practice. Nearly half as many students were retained in 2019 compared to 2018 with fewer retentions occurring in elementary, middle, and high school levels.

#5: Recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers can be challenging. However, the overall retention rate of teachers and the retention rate of highly effective teachers have both improved this year. The district has utilized more platforms to recruit teachers, including virtual job fairs.

**GAMBLE:** NONE

LUKE: This area is a great highlight of the success the district has been partial to since the Superintendent’s tenure. The graduation rate being the highlight, the new growth mindset is what
is best for Lake County students. I believe with the PASS instructors we should see an increase in academic achievement as well, for the 2019-2020 school year and continuing to emphasize instruction that is research based, and good for kids will increase these efforts. Focusing work this year on embedding support & understanding at the school level and into classrooms is critical.

MATHIAS: Superintendent has made great strides to improve graduation rates and provide more opportunities for students to participate in CTE programs. She has brought to the Board needed policy changes to better address the academic needs of students and new programs to address the behavioral and emotional needs. While funding remains our primary challenge, I know that the Superintendent and Board will continue the work necessary to better position ourselves financially through active engagement with the decision makers in Tallahassee.