

**OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
JOINT WORKSHOP WITH
SCHOOL BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA**

JANUARY 12, 2023

**THURSDAY
11:15 A.M.**

**ELS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
JUPITER, FLORIDA**

LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION (DELEGATION) MEMBERS:

State Senator Tina Polsky, Chair
State Senator Gayle Harrell, Vice Chair
State Senator Lori Berman
State Representative Mike Caruso
State Representative Joseph Casello
State Representative Jervonte Edmonds
State Representative Peggy Gossett-Seidman
State Senator Bobby Powell Jr.
State Representative Rick Roth
State Representative David Silvers
State Representative Kelly Skidmore
State Representative Emily Slosberg
State Representative John Snyder
State Representative Katherine Waldron

SCHOOL BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY (SCHOOL BOARD) MEMBERS:

Frank A. Barbieri, Chair, District 5
Karen Brill, Vice Chair, District 3
Marcia Andrews, District 6
Alexandria Ayala, District 2
Edwin Ferguson, District 7
Barbara McQuinn, District 1
Erica Whitfield, District 4

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT:

Genaya Mercado, Delegation Aide, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation
Victoria Nowlan, Executive Director, Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:

Danielle Freeman, Deputy Clerk
Jillian Zalewska, Deputy Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER/ATTENDANCE

The chair called the meeting to order at 11:15 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTIONS – DELEGATION AND SCHOOL BOARD

(CLERK'S NOTE: Delegation member self-introductions took place at this time.)

3. PRESENTATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Mr. Barbieri made brief introductory remarks and invited the School Board members to introduce themselves.

(CLERK'S NOTE: School Board member self-introductions took place at this time.)

School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) Superintendent Mike Burke delivered a slideshow presentation in which he discussed the following:

- SDPBC statistics;
- Recent accomplishments;
- the passage of a referendum to address school safety and student mental health issues, improve teacher pay, and maintain arts and music education programs;
- the Independent Referendum Oversight Committee;
- the school police and enhanced security measures;
- the newly constructed Dr. Joaquin Garcia High School;
- the district's mission statement and strategic plan;
- the Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee; and
- projected workforce needs in Palm Beach County.

Mr. Burke highlighted the following legislative priorities:

- school safety and security;
- increased investment in mental health services;
- enhancement of apprenticeship programs;
- permission for the SDPBC to collect only the third page of the EL2 form for student

athletes;

- opposition to legislation that would adversely impact students and parents because of their gender, race, religion, or ethnicity;
- reduction in the time frame for reemployment of Florida Retirement System (FRS) retirees;
- funding for a professional development program;
- expansion of teacher internship and apprenticeship programs;
- an increase in base student allocation commensurate with inflation and the cost of living;
- mitigation of salary compression issues for veteran teachers;
- full funding for any new State requirement affecting the SDPBC;
- continuation of the district's ability to raise funds through locally approved referenda;
- expansion of the lifespan of the locally voted millage;
- restoration of the discretionary 2.0 millage levy for capital purposes;
- consideration of the full expected cost of voucher and scholarship programs during FY 2023-2024 budget development;
- implementation of measures regarding accountability and assessments; and
- expansion of pre-kindergarten programs

4. DISCUSSION

In response to a question from Sen. Polsky, Mr. Burke provided information about the school guardian program and said that the district was taking steps to evaluate the program.

Sen. Harrell discussed the need for effective, qualified teachers. She requested assistance in setting up a pilot program in collaboration with local public colleges and universities that would assist in funding four-year teaching degrees for paraprofessionals within the school district.

Responding to questions from Rep. Skidmore, Mr. Burke discussed the training of youth mental health first aid providers and the district's participation in apprenticeship programs for teachers.

Rep. Casello expressed concerns about teacher retention, partisanship, and programs affecting the future of public education.

In response to questions from Rep. Waldron and Sen. Polsky, Mr. Burke discussed the following:

- the district's efforts to meet State requirements regarding the availability of books in schools;
- salary compression;
- the effects of school choice initiatives and charter schools on public education; and
- concerns about the financial impact of scholarship programs.

Sen. Berman stated that she was seeking an opportunity to add a bill amendment that would eliminate the requirement for female student athletes to submit information about their menstrual health.

Rep. Gossett-Seidman posed a question about CPR and concussion response training among teachers and staff, and Mr. Burke reported that coaches were required to be trained in CPR. He stated that the SDPBC was meeting all safety requirements.

Rep. Roth requested additional details about the following three items: the district's efforts to counter outward migration in communities and link school programs to locally available jobs; school safety and security issues; and the process for reviewing books to ensure compliance with State law while maintaining sufficient collections of educational materials.

Mr. Burke discussed the district's efforts to form partnerships with local businesses. He also clarified that the school district had not banned any books and explained that the review process had been expanded to include classroom libraries.

In response to questions posed by Rep. Edmunds, Mr. Burke spoke about the need for more guidance counselors; the school's strategies for addressing the needs of homeless students; the shortage of affordable housing; and ongoing efforts to encourage parent engagement.

Rep. Edmonds said that he planned to file two pieces of education-related legislation: the Summer Youth Service Program, which would facilitate creation of summer internships for students, and the Save Our Teachers Act, which would increase teacher pay.

Rep. Caruso inquired about the school district's implementation of laws requiring schools to teach about the Holocaust, antisemitism, and hate crimes. Mr. Burke said that the district partnered with outside agencies for Holocaust education and invited Holocaust

survivors to come to the schools and present to students.

Mr. Barbieri requested that the School Board be given more time to meet with the Delegation at future meetings.

The School Board members each shared brief remarks.

Mr. Ferguson requested that the Delegation members assist students by helping to foster relationships between schools and the private sector.

Ms. Whitfield asked that pre-kindergarten teachers be made eligible for benefits and expressed interest in collaborating with Sen. Harrell to develop a teacher preparation program in partnership with a local institution of higher education. She also discussed the effect of State legislation on students' well-being and mental health.

Ms. Brill discussed alternative assessments for students with disabilities.

Ms. Andrews spoke about the West Technical Education Center, recruitment and retention of teachers, efforts in the Glades region, and the importance of parental involvement.

Ms. Ayala offered to assist Rep. Edmonds with his legislation regarding teacher pay and thanked Sen. Berman for her efforts regarding student athletes' medical forms. She also encouraged the Delegation members to reach out to the School Board for information about legislation.

Ms. McQuinn discussed the remodeling and reopening of the North Technical Education Center in Riviera Beach.

At Mr. Barbieri's invitation, Mr. Burke introduced the SDPBC staff and consultants in attendance.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

Sen. Polsky thanked the School Board members for their participation and encouraged them to continue communicating with the Delegation.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 12:49 p.m., the chair declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVED:

Chair/Vice Chair