

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Action Item
October 26, 2016

SUBJECT: Review of Revised Turnaround Option Plan for School District of Polk County

PROPOSED BOARD ACTION

Consideration of Turnaround Option Plan for Approval

AUTHORITY FOR STATE BOARD ACTION

Section 1008.33, Florida Statutes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Polk County has two schools that require a revised turnaround plan:

- Lake Alfred-Addair Middle School
- Westwood Middle School

Supporting Documentation Included: TOP Addendum

Invited Presenters: Jacqueline Byrd, Superintendent, Polk County Public Schools; Hershel Lyons, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools; and Melissa Ramsey, Regional Executive Director, Bureau of School Improvement

**Polk County Public Schools
TOP Addendum**

Removal and Relocation of Teachers

Since the August 31st meeting with the State Board of Education, Polk County Schools has complied with the areas of concern outlined by Commissioner Stewart and Board members by completing the following:

- Removal of all teachers and staff from the five TOP schools with either 1-year or 3-year unsatisfactory VAM score(s) and prioritized replacement with teachers with Highly Effective (HE) VAM scores (using both 2014-15 and 2015-16 VAM results).
- TOP school teachers with VAM scores of Highly Effective and Effective in 2016-17 compared to 2015-16.
- Upon exhaustion of all transfer possibilities begin recruiting Effective teachers.

	Lake Alfred-Addair Middle School, 2015-16 VAM Scores for Teachers Employed in 2015-16		Lake Alfred-Addair Middle School, 2015-16 VAM Scores for Teachers Employed as of October 10, 2016	
Category	Number Teachers	Percent Teachers	Number Teachers	Percent Teachers
Highly Effective	2	9%	3	25%
Effective	10	44%	3	25%
Needs Improvement	7	30%	6	50%
Unsatisfactory	4	17%	0	0%
Grand Total	23	100%	12	100%

	Westwood Middle School, 2015-16 VAM Scores for Teachers Employed in 2015-16		Westwood Middle School, 2015-16 VAM Scores for Teachers Employed as of October 10, 2016	
Category	Number Teachers	Percent Teachers	Number Teachers	Percent Teachers
Highly Effective	0	0%	1	9%
Effective	11	52%	8	73%
Needs Improvement	5	24%	2	18%
Unsatisfactory	5	24%	0	0%
Grand Total	21	100%	11	100%

Recruitment Strategies

- Teachers who received a rating of Highly Effective were personally contacted by Superintendent Byrd regarding transfer to the TOP schools.
- The district has implemented a centralized hiring approach for TOP Schools.
- Weekly vacancy reports and prospective hires are provided to TOP School principals, Regional supervisors and District staff.
- Teachers identified by the Department of Education as “High Impact Teachers” were contacted and invited to an informational meeting with Superintendent Byrd, Board Chair and TOP School administrators.
- District staff personally communicated with all middle school “High Impact Teachers” to encourage them to request a transfer into one of the five TOP schools.
- Central Office Staff members who have a teaching certificate were temporarily utilized to fill vacancies created by the removal of unsatisfactory teachers until new staff can be hired.
- A “TOP School Blitz” was initiated where teachers with a minimum of Effective (2015-16) VAM rating that are working at non-TOP schools can request a transfer.
- Superintendent Byrd reached out to recently retired teachers who had a previous Highly Effective or Effective VAM ratings to encourage them to return to the profession and teach at one of the five TOP schools.
- Superintendent Byrd reached out to local college and university presidents, vice presidents and deans regarding teacher recruitment from: Southeastern University, Polk State University, USF and Florida Southern.
- Human Resources secured an agreement with "Troops to Teachers."
- The District is presently utilizing an ongoing recruiting strategy for interested candidates who are from outside the district. Superintendent Byrd requested VAM scores of all current Florida teachers from the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) as the basis for the recruitment database.

TOP School Principals:

- All principals at each of the five TOP schools have signed confirmation letters clearly outlining their agreement with the district’s expectation for achievement. The expectation is for the school to receive at least a C grade when 2016-17 school grades are released.
- All schools will be monitored and evaluated continuously throughout the school year by District leadership and the contracted management company, Educational Directions (AMO), using achievement data to allow for reassignment if key indicators do not show adequate and ongoing improvement.
- Principals in place at Lake Alfred-Addair and Westwood Middle will remain as the building principals at those two TOP schools for the following reasons:

Julie Grice - Lake Alfred-Addair Middle School

- Selected by Superintendent Byrd and began work in June 2016
- Former Regional Assistant Superintendent
- Has strong community buy-in and support as evidenced by the increase in parent involvement at the school (SAC attendance and volunteers)
- Demonstrated immediate effectiveness (Discipline is down 45% for the first 25 days of school)
- In her role as Assistant Principal, she brought the school to a B grade at Sleepy Hill Middle School
- In her role as Principal, she brought the school to a B grade at Sleepy Hill Elementary School

Todd Bennett – Westwood Middle School

- Selected to lead the school in July 2014
- Has strong community buy-in and support
- Demonstrated effectiveness:
 - o Brought school from F to D in first year (2014-15)
 - o Improved percentage of possible points gained each year (School Grade)
 - o Highest achievement in middle school acceleration (62%) of five TOP schools and 9th of 30 Middle Schools in district
 - o Oversaw a 75% reduction in fights and violent incidents during first year
 - o Served on leadership teams that increased the school grade from D to B at Sleepy Hill Middle where he was the Dean of Students and D to C at Stambaugh Middle School where he was the Assistant Principal