

MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING

September 15, 2022
Conference Call

Chair Tom Grady called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and pointed out that the Heritage Foundation recognized Florida as number one in its study of K-12 education throughout the country. A few things in the Heritage Foundations research was Florida's embracing education freedom, respect for parents rights and transparency.

Update

Final Report of the Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury

Chair Grady recognized Jacob Oliva, Senior Chancellor, Division of Public Schools to update the board on the final report of the twentieth statewide grand jury. Sr. Chancellor Oliva thanked the board and reminded them that Governor DeSantis petitioned the Florida Supreme Court to impanel a statewide grand jury to examine and review school safety measures throughout the state following the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The grand jury was charged specifically with examining districts in respect to four priorities: one, whether refusal or failure to follow the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, resulted in unnecessary and avoidable risk to students across the state; two, whether districts committed and continue to commit fraud and deceit by accepting state funds conditioned on implementation of certain safety measures while knowingly failing to act; three, whether school officials committed and continue to commit fraud and deceit by mismanaging, failing to use, and diverting funds from multi-million dollar bonds specifically solicited for school safety initiatives; and four, whether school officials violated and continue to violate state law by systematically underreporting incidents of criminal activity to the Florida Department of Education. Sr. Chancellor Oliva added that the departments' role was to better align the SESIR definitions for Florida's criminal statute and update Rule 6A-1.0017 to remove the discretion of school districts SESIR reporting pertaining to the assessment of a student's intent, ensuring that if an incident or an event occurs, it will be reported regardless of the outcome.

Continuing, Sr. Chancellor Oliva reviewed the list of school districts mentioned in the Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury report for continuing to have troubling practices: Broward, Duval, Miami-Dade, Orange, and Palm Beach. Adding that in Broward specifically the grand jury found credible allegations that the Smart Bond Program, through fraud and deceit had been mismanaged and continues to be mismanaged. With the report identifying five school board members for having mismanaged the program and concluding with a recommendation of suspension for the school board members. Sr. Chancellor Oliva continued, stating that Governor DeSantis removed four sitting board members from Miami-Dade with the fifth member no longer a sitting member and added that during the Office of Safe Schools visit with Broward it was discovered that the district still employed officials from the previous administration that were complicit with the failures on school safety. The Office of Safe Schools immediately sent a strong letter to Superintendent Cartwright asking how these employees are still employed in the district.

Sr. Chancellor Oliva then provided a brief update on Miami-Dade, stating that the Office of Safe Schools met with district officials August 30 to discuss the grand jury report that included the ongoing practice of

not reporting out-of-school suspensions. Adding that during their visit the Office of Safe Schools found the district still engaged in data laundering with regards to school safety and discipline by misusing coding. Sr. Chancellor Oliva continued adding Superintendent Dotres agreed immediately to cease the practice of utilizing incorrect coding of success centers. The sentiment was codified in a letter from Superintendent Dotres to Commissioner Diaz on September 2nd that indicated Miami-Dade Public Schools was committed to fully and faithfully complying with Florida law and State Board of Education rules.

Chair Grady opened the board for questions. Mr. Petty asked what delayed the report after completion from being released to the public. Chair Grady asked if the current administration in Miami-Dade had any involvement with the failures identified in the grand jury report.

Chair Grady conducted a roll call. The following members were present: Vice Chair Ben Gibson; Esther Byrd; Ryan Petty; Joe York; and Grazie Christie.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the 2023-24 Education Operating and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget Request

Chair Grady recognized Suzanne Pridgeon, Deputy Commissioner, Finance and Operations for an overview of the 2023-2024 Education Operating and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget Request. Ms. Pridgeon thanked the board and noted the budget request is for approximately \$24 billion, with \$23.2 billion for operating and \$1.8 billion for fixed capital outlay. Representing an increase of \$880 million over the current fiscal year. Adding that the increase represents the department's priorities in school safety and teacher recruitment/retention, with the largest portion of the funding going to the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).

Continuing, Ms. Pridgeon provided the board an overview of some funding categoricals. Stating that there is an increase of \$40 million for safe schools, which totals \$250 million. A \$20 million increase for student transportation, which totals \$535 million, and a \$20 million increase for mental health, which totals \$160 million. Adding that this represents an increase of \$157 per student, which is \$8,374 per FEFP and when compared to the funding per student in 2018-2019, this request represents an increase of \$940.88 per student.

Chair Grady opened the board for questions. Mr. Petty asked if the new enforcement responsibilities from the grand jury report are included in the legislative budget request. Chair Grady asked if the Office of Safe Schools will be able to see real-time district SESIR data.

Chair Grady called for a motion to approve the 2023-24 Education Operating and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget Request. Ms. Bryd made the motion, with a second by Dr. Christie. Chair Grady opened the board for public comment. Dr. Tonjua Williams, President, St. Petersburg College thanked the board and the department for setting high standards and maintaining \$30 million in student access funds that assists state colleges in closing the achievement gap and expediting student completion. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Chair Grady adjourned the meeting of the State Board of Education at 10:53 A.M.

Chris Emerson, Corporate Secretary

Tom Grady, Chair