

# **EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE**

## **Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the 2024 Interim**

**July 29, 2024**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The second meeting of the Efficient and Effective School District Governance Task Force was held on July 29, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Kim Banta, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Senator Michael J. Nemes Co-Chair; Representative Kim Banta Co-Chair; Senator Lindsey Tichenor; Representatives James Tipton, Tina Bojanowski, and Ken Fleming; Allison Ball, Britany Abdelahad, Phillip Baker, Angela Masden, George Nichols, and Jody Wurtenberger.

Guests: Dr. Marty Pollio, Superintendent; Dr. Katy DeFerrari, Chief of Staff; Dr. Terra Greenwell, Chief Academic Officer; Shalonda Foster, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Academics.

LRC Staff: Joshua Collins, Emily Wiley, and Maurya Allen.

### **Approval of Minutes - July 15, 2024**

Mr. Baker made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2024, meeting. Senator Nemes seconded, and the motion was passed by voice vote.

### **Presentations from Jefferson County Public School District**

Superintendent Pollio, Dr. DeFerrari, and Dr. Greenwell presented on JCPS district employment, contracts, and finances. The presentation addressed specifics of collective bargaining, full-time employee pay, raises, stipends, memoranda of agreement, legal partnership contracts, and other financial agreements. Dr. Greenwell addressed the various academic contracts used to provide curriculum, learning platforms, or address legislative mandates. She highlighted the use of volume-discounted pricing, because the district is so large. Dr. Pollio presented the most recent audits and reviews done of the district.

In response to a question from Chair Banta, Dr. Pollio said the incentive program for teachers to go to high-needs schools was a result of data showing fewer teachers electing to teach at those schools over the course of the last eight to ten years. In September, the district will have more data on how many were retained using the incentive program. The program did not resolve all vacancies but did encourage teachers to choose high needs schools.

Responding to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Dr. Pollio said KDE reimburses the district for the salaries of employees working under a memorandum of agreement.

In response to questions from Representative Tipton, Dr. Pollio said the district has been successful in reducing egregious behavior incidents occurring in schools. Behavior was an issue prior to the pandemic, and was exacerbated by the pandemic. There is a concerted effort by the district, state, and national education experts to understand the causes of behavior problems and address the issue with the appropriate level of discipline. Dr. Pollio said the district recently presented a school police department plan to the school board. There are 40 police officers in the district, weapons detection systems in all schools, and openings for 15 more officers to be in place when school starts next month. The district financial reserves are based on percentages set by KDE, and projections are that the reserve will last until approximately 2028.

Responding to a question from Representative Fleming, Dr. Pollio said he could provide a breakdown of the number of teachers in each of the salary ranks. He is concerned with the trend which shows fewer new teachers and more veteran teachers. Dr. Pollio said the negotiated contracts are done through model procurement. Dr. Greenwell said there are committees of experts assembled for single source contracts, especially for curriculum, to determine the best fit. Dr. Pollio said there is occasionally contention between the superintendent and the school board, but he truly believes that they all strive to do what is best for students.

In response to questions from Mr. Wurtenberger, Dr. Pollio said there is an internal audit team as part of a recommended reorganization, but the district uses an external contracted team when their internal team needs assistance. Additionally, there is an internal review process for external contracts to ensure they are managed appropriately and having the impact they were contracted to receive. Dr. DeFerrari said there are diverse supports for attendance problems, because there are diverse barriers to school attendance. There are 25 employees who support schools in developing and enforcing an attendance plan, with support of other employees, especially school nurses.

Responding to a question from Senator Tichenor, Dr. Pollio said he does not have the year-over-year retention rates, but he said the recruiting and retention department has been working to keep retention at 96 percent. The district would like to see that improve. He said the retention rate is nowhere near as good for bus drivers, and he can get the specific data for bus drivers and provide it to the members.

In response to a question from Ms. Abdelahad, Dr. Pollio said there is not an outcome-based incentive for teachers in JCPS. Additionally, there is a process to determine when it is more financially feasible to create an internal team than to contract with an external agency. That is best illustrated with school nurses where the district is in the process of hiring more nurses directly in order to phase out the contracts for nurses.

In response to a question from Mr. Baker, Dr. Pollio said he would need to look more closely at data for other schools of similar size, but he feels the district is very similar to peer districts in terms of attendance. Additionally, they are performing better than other Kentucky school districts in terms of percentage. Clearly, transportation has been an issue in the district, and there is progress to resolve issues from last year.

Responding to a question from Mr. Nichols, Dr. Pollio said the district can provide data on the “Vital Signs” program that tracks attendance and how full-service medical care on-site is positively impacting culture, safety, and attendance.

Dr. Greenwell and Shalonda Foster presented on the literacy and numeracy shifts made in the district curriculum and instruction based on best practices and legislative changes. They have worked to focus on foundational skills, specifically for students prior to 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, which was found to be a critical point in literacy development based on screener scores. Ms. Foster spoke specifically to the process of selecting high quality instructional resources (HQIR) and training teachers in the selection process. Over the last two summers, the district has trained over 6,000 teachers in curriculum assessment, selection, and implementation. A video featuring staff testimonials implementing the improved literacy curriculum was shared with the committee and can be viewed in the presentation posted on the task force meeting materials webpage.

Dr. Greenwell discussed how the district’s experience in implementing an improved and consistent literacy curriculum has led to a similar approach to teaching numeracy. The district developed math improvement plans, similar to the ones created for literacy, and are beginning implementation in schools. She presented the key take-aways of implementation of the new curriculum and how they will guide the next steps for the district.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Dr. Greenwell said it will likely be three to five years to see real impact on state test scores. However, MAP testing and ongoing evaluations are giving an indication this program is working and having real success.

Responding to a question from Representative Fleming, Dr. Greenwell said she can provide the checkpoints and goals for success to the members. All the SBDMs were involved in the curriculum consultation process, and information is provided to parents about the curriculum as well as parents being invited to milestone presentations held by the students.

In response to a question from Mr. Wurtenberger, Dr. Pollio said Senate Bill 1 of the 2022 Regular Session was probably the most impactful piece of legislation for schools because it allowed districts to standardize curriculum across the district. Dr. Greenwell said over time, education professionals have learned more about the science of teaching and learning, and the course of instruction has changed to meet the needs of more students.

Responding to questions from Ms. Masden, Ms. Foster said the goal of literacy leadership teams is to monitor the implementation of the curriculum and ensure students are meeting the goals set by the district. They help determine if students need additional supports and help decide what those supports should be. Ms. Foster said instruction starts with a strong Tier 1 curriculum, followed by supplemental supports for struggling students, including Map Growth, Capti, and CERT diagnostics that identify individual foundational skill targets that are age and grade level appropriate.

Responding to a question from Mr. Nichols, Dr. Greenwell said there are nearly 20,000 multilingual learners in the district. If requested, students can be assigned one-on-one instruction and interpretation services. Dr. Pollio said it is a challenge that the state scores label schools as failing, even while multilingual learners are growing.

In response to a question from Senator Tichenor, Ms. Foster said the use of Capti in Grades 6-12, and small group differential instruction in middle and high school, gives the opportunity to make an impact on students who did not receive strong instruction in younger grades. Instructional coaches and building leaders are helping to change structures to implement the curriculum effectively. Dr. Pollio said the district is seeing record high rates for graduation and postsecondary readiness.

Responding to a question from Mr. Baker, Dr. Pollio said the accelerated improvement schools (AIS) are those identified by the state and the district as the lowest performing

schools. The common features of these schools are high levels of students living in poverty and being located in the west and southwest portion of the city. Additionally, large numbers of young students come into the schools not kindergarten ready. Dr. Greenwell said the district has to have an intense focus on those incoming students to accelerate their learning in the first year.

### **Announcements**

Chair Banta announced that the next meeting of the task force will be Monday, August 19, 2024, in Annex 154 at 1:00 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.