

RE: Superintendent Performance

FROM: Sally Hunt

DATE: March 31, 2023

#1

Rating – 3

Improved collaboration with all stakeholders is needed around short and long-term SMART goals. I believe this led to the vote of no confidence by the Palm Coast-Flagler Regional Chamber of Commerce:

“The Palm Coast-Flagler Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors regards Flagler Schools as a cornerstone in fulfilling our Vision and Mission to our community. We envision the future of Flagler County as even more business-friendly, prosperous, and growth-ready— enhancing the overall quality of life for everyone who lives, works, or travels here. Our mission is to foster business growth and success at the organizational, individual, and business ecosystem level, through advocacy, education, and connection.

To fulfill our Vision and Mission, we rely on Flagler Schools to be excellent, provide high quality education and be consistent. After all, the business community hires the result of the local education system. We expect great relationships and trust between Administration and faculty, staff, students, families and community members.

We are not satisfied this is being accomplished in our district under the current leadership of Superintendent Cathy Mittelstadt. Therefore, it is the Chamber’s position of no confidence in Superintendent Mittelstadt, who has failed to reach these objectives successfully.

The Palm Coast-Flagler Regional Chamber of Commerce welcomes a change in leadership as Superintendent of Flagler Schools.”

#2

Rating – 3

I have received mixed feedback about the superintendent’s interactions and influence across stakeholders. The greatest area of improvement in this area may be on the guiding principle *Get to ‘Yes.’* Flagler Schools “belongs to” the residents of Flagler County, entrusted to district leadership and the school board. The superintendent must do better to balance her own vision for Flagler Schools with the needs and vision brought to her by others.

#3

Rating – 2

This has been a weakness within the district. There has been a lack of leadership, communication with employees at all levels of the organization, consistency with policies and procedures, and accountability. Evidence of this can be found in the Operational Audit by the State of Florida Auditor General. Finding 3, for instance, stems from a known issue that was not adequately addressed and was still being handled insufficiently when I brought my personal experience with a volunteer background check application to the superintendent's attention August 30, 2022.

Finding 3: District records did not always demonstrate that the District conducted required searches of the names of prospective school volunteers against the applicable registration information for sexual predators and sexual offenders or had obtained appropriate background screenings.

"In June 2022, we requested for examination District records supporting the NSOPW searches or level 2 background screenings for 30 selected volunteers from the volunteer list of 424 volunteers and 4 selected volunteers from the names of volunteers who participated in four overnight field trips listed on school records. However, District records were not provided to demonstrate that 3 of the 4 overnight field trip volunteers had their names searched against the NSOPW or had level 2 background screenings. According to District personnel, the original searches or screening records were probably misplaced.

We extended our audit procedures to perform a search of the names of the 3 volunteers against the NSOPW information and none of the 3 volunteers were listed as a sexual predator or sexual offender. However, our procedures cannot substitute for management's responsibility to ensure, and document, that individuals are properly evaluated before they provide volunteer services. Absent effective controls, there is an increased risk that volunteers with unsuitable backgrounds may have direct contact with students."

#4

Rating – 3

The Board, parents/guardians, and the public, including community partners, continue to ask for more specific and measurable goals and a clear tracking and communication of progress. I have also both publicly and privately asked for more root cause analysis to inform policy, needed changes, and initiatives to drive improved outcomes.

I have appreciated the staff who have brought infographics to the board meetings. This must continue to improve. Board members, parents/guardians, and the community need timely and relevant information, prepared and presented in a way that all can easily understand.

#5

Rating – 3

The superintendent drives much of the Board's agenda and effectiveness. Parents/guardians and staff are calling for the Board to do more which has been difficult with very packed agendas including items that should not have been prioritized above more important topics.

The superintendent has informed me of her plan to correct this. I hope to see better structure, follow-up, and follow-through going forward so that the Board can better review existing policies and create any needed.

#6

Rating – 3

I have received mixed feedback about the superintendent's leadership and community partnership on district growth needs. This is an area where greater innovation, partnership, and trust are needed.

#7

Rating – 3

Marking this as satisfactory as I don't know the expectation that was set with the superintendent. Going forward, I would expect Superintendent Mittelstadt to meet one-on-one with all principals more frequently. I would also expect a more collaborative and congenial relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and other business and community leaders.

#8

Rating – 3

While I appreciated Superintendent Mittelstadt taking the Board through Capturing Kids Hearts exercises, she has now been in her role for what may be two back-to-back dysfunctional boards. It is my opinion that the superintendent sets the tone for both the district and Board. Because Ms. Mittelstadt is more guarded, I believe this negatively impacts trust and openness on the Board and across the district.

#9

Rating – 2

This is a big area of concern. Superintendent Mittelstadt possesses many great attributes; however, the role of Superintendent of Flagler Schools requires strong business acumen and leadership courage due to the district's unique needs. We are not in a maintenance phase; we need a well-rounded leader to help lift and grow. There are skill gaps that need to be developed.