

Supplemental questions/responses to the application for Karyle Green, Candidate for the Superintendent position at The School District of Osceola County, FL.

***Q3b) What plan of action would you take to implement Florida's Race to the Top initiatives successfully?***

I believe the plan of action for the implementation of any program should follow a strategic course. The School Board establishes the vision and direction for the program; a steering committee and sub committees are formed to develop the program – complete with measurable goals & objectives, timeline, strengths and weaknesses of what's already occurring, rubrics for evaluating effectiveness of what is developed; processes are created; a schedule for evaluation and revision is set; and the program is implemented with fidelity. Whether it's *Race to the Top* or any other district initiative, success can only be realized with a strategic plan being developed, implemented, evaluated and revised as established at the outset.

***Q9) Will you allow teachers to provide input and have a voice into matters that concern them? How will you go about this? How will you determine if there are legitimate issues and concerns at the teacher/staff level?***

It is my belief that the way to develop trust, a collaborative spirit, good will and a strong work ethic is to give people a voice in their contributions to the organization – whether that be teachers, other employee groups, students, parents, or the community. Some of the best ideas, over time, have often come from those to whom the notion has the greatest affect. I would anticipate, at the central administrative level, monthly meetings for discussion of issues within the District (i.e. potential changes, particular unresolved issues, ideas for improvement, etc.) I would hope that these same types of discussion meetings are happening at the building level regarding the same types of issues so that, through this communication, issues arise which can be resolved leading to a more collaborative trusting environment between administration and teachers/staff.

***Q10) How will you handle a difficult parent? Define "difficult parent". How will you handle five individual personalities on the School Board?***

Handling the difficult parent, again, is similar to handling the difficult “anything else” – teacher, community member, student in the classroom, etc. One must find the true root of the issue. Oftentimes, what the parent is being difficult about isn't the true issue, but something that the parent feels he/she has control over as opposed to the real issue of which he/she has no control. It is my practice that there is a specific chain of command which should be followed depending on what the topic is and a set of procedures at each step of the way which need to be undertaken to make sure that there has been a response at each level. The discussions and responses at each level are presented to the next in line to either support or revise. Once the issue reaches the top level, there is no where else to go.

A definition of “difficult parent” might be one who doesn’t realize that there is an answer, which might be in disagreement, to what he/she wants and continues “up the line” hearing the same thing, again and again, but not taking heed to what’s been decided. Sometime the difficult parent is just one who consumes an inordinate amount of your day, other times it’s someone who gets belligerent, hostile, or threatening which can never, nor will be tolerated.

As far as “handling” individual personalities on the School Board, I would hate to term it “handling.” It has been my practice to bring the Board together in many situations with many types of outcomes desired to work on common issues. There not only has to be business meetings, special meetings, work sessions, but there also has to be a purpose for each Board member to “shine” in areas that mean the most to them. I have never (in almost 30 years of education) worked with a Board member who had ill-intent as far as the District was concerned. Each has always wanted what’s best for the District. It’s always been the responsibility of the Superintendent to be able to funnel those efforts in the right direction – for the betterment of the District and for positive results of issues at hand – that’s been the most important. Keeping Board members current in their responsibilities of Board membership is a key facet to this concept.

***Q14) How do fine arts and performing arts fit in to your overall plan for a school district?***

Total co-curricular programs as well as extra-curricular programs are great pieces to an overall educational program. There are tremendous advantages to student participation in activities and events outside of the classroom setting. I would continue to seek resources to support and grow such programs throughout my superintendent tenure, even if it meant finding private funding in the event District finances became too restricted. Too much brain research regarding the advantages of participation in the arts and too much learning about the advantages of participation in activities such as this has been discovered to simply let these programs evaporate from our public schools.

***Q16) Discuss the experiences you have had in working with the special needs of exceptional education students and language enriched pupils (LEP). What initiatives have you implemented in your current district to meet the special needs of exceptional education students and limited English speaking students? What were the results?***

I am fortunate to have worked in several districts with significant ESE and LEP populations. Each district has realized its own challenges with programs serving these students but there are similarities to serving all student populations. Determining the strengths and areas for improvement is, first and foremost, paramount to meeting the needs of ESE & LEP students more successfully. Following established law and corresponding guidance from not only the Federal but State Departments of Education

help support the initiatives in each of these areas. Creating a program which specifically serves one's district is also important.

Each district's ESE and LEP student populations have its own unique needs. For example, in my current district, we were found to be out of compliance in the area of over-identification of a particular population for ESE services; specifically African-American male students. In order to address this deficiency, we researched ways to alter our referral and identification process, trained teachers in working with different populations of students, introduced proven instructional programs to our district which addressed these weaknesses and have since been found compliant with our identification procedures.

In terms of LEP issues, the county in which my current district sits has been established as a refugee settlement area for the people from Burma (Myanmar). This has created an influx of more than 1500 Burmese students in a short period of time. Most of these students had no formal education at all. Students were of all ages – pre-school to twenties. Programs had to be developed to address the needs of Newcomers, and these programs had to address movements between language levels in rapid fashion as students were learning at varied rates. The other major area of need was translation. There are almost 60 dialects of Burmese and we have utilized personnel as well as technology to address translation and instruction needs. Our LEP students are becoming more fluent with the English language, many of them meeting the achievement requirements set by the State of Indiana.

***Q17) Discuss the progress the schools in your district have made in the area of student achievement. What role did you play in these accomplishments?***

I began my central office experience as an Asst. Supt. for School Management in a district which was suffering great decline in achievement areas each year. At that time, we brought together a team of teachers from the classroom, led by an administrator, to develop and implement a full curricular program across our district, where there was none before. This team began by researching best practices, analyzing what resources were at the district's availability, working with teachers in all schools surveying the strengths and weaknesses of what was currently in place, and creating a curriculum and all its elements to implement the following year. That worked produced five steady years of increases in achievement levels across the district.

The district which I currently lead has five total and distinct attendance areas. Upon my arrival, there was no consistency in achievement levels at our schools. We had pieces and parts of a curriculum, but not a total curriculum in place across the district. At that time, I replicated the process described above, bringing a team together to develop and implement a full curricular program across our district. The results have been astounding. It has improved collaboration among staff at grade levels and subject areas. It has incorporated technology into the classroom on a daily basis. It has connected our curriculum to all standards expected of students at each grade level/subject area. Even

our schools at the top of the achievement grid are expected to improve. (Even if you're already scoring in the 90's, there is room for improvement.) Data is used to direct instructional efforts on a student-by-student basis. Teachers have been more in control of their teaching than ever before. Principals have a better understanding of data than ever before. Professional development has been focused on the instructional strategies of implementing the curriculum. Everyone is working for a common purpose – improvement of achievement for every student in every school. We look for continued growth in achievement levels and student engagement in the classroom.

***Q19) Discuss the experience you have in motivating a diverse staff and student body.***

In my career, I think one of my greatest strengths has been the motivation of others. Part of that is because I don't hesitate to get involved in whatever it is that needs to be done. I have heard from staff, teachers, fellow administrators, students, parents, and supervisors comments like

- She doesn't hesitate to get her hands dirty
- She runs circles around anyone else before her
- She cares more than anyone I've worked with before
- She cares about ALL her students
- She takes the time to recognize what we do that's good
- She helps us learn from our mistakes
- She doesn't ever 'throw someone under the bus'

When people take the time to say things like this to you and about you, they also are motivated to give you their best effort.

***Q20) How has diversity impacted your leadership in your current workplace? What role have you played in celebrating diversity?***

I can't really say that diversity has impacted my leadership at all. I have always been part of a diverse environment whether it's been school, work, personal time, faith, pleasure. I am who I am regardless of the diversity of those around me. I have been a part in celebrating all types of diversity – race, religion, ability, etc., and will continue to make sure recognition of excellence and celebration of diversity in all areas continues.

***Q23) What is your position on privatization of County School Board jobs?***

In these economically challenging times, privatization of services is something that continues to be considered in districts all across the nation. It is my belief, however, that even though there may be financial benefit to privatizing services, there isn't an overall benefit to the savings which might occur. Services which are usually considered for privatization are those which are provided by the residents of the district – community members, parents, graduates. These are the workers who take pride in their work and

ownership in their schools. They care about the image of the school in their community. When districts outsource, even though it might be cheaper, they lose the immediate response, the emergency services which their own employees provide.

I have known several of my colleagues to outsource services and within a year or two return to hiring their own workforce due to the inherent benefits of having those who care about their work provide that work.

***Q25) What sort of relationship do you envision between employer and Union at the School Board?***

Quite simply, one built on trust, collaboration, hard work, mutual benefit, and common goals. A relationship such as the one just described creates a top notch educational program of instruction and services to be emulated state-wide.

***Q32) What do you know about this community and school district?***

I have been researching Osceola County and the School District since its prior superintendent vacancy and know that there are changing demographics in student population ethnicity and poverty levels. I know there is a great desire to maintain areas of great academic achievement and improve those areas where academic achievement is not exceptional. I know Osceola County is a great place to live and there are tremendous opportunities for partnerships between business, industry and the educational system which will benefit the students at all levels. I know that I have a lot to offer The School District of Osceola County, FL.

***Q42) How would you organize this district's custodial services?***

I would like to see a central department for the District's custodial services which establishes the goals and expectations within the department. The central department would develop a program of training, monitoring and evaluating the work in cooperation with building level administration to assure it is being done in accordance with expectations.

***Q43) How would you operate the food service program? Should the food service program operate in the black?***

Many of the requirements for a public school's food service program are established by the Federal Government if one participates in the Free & Reduced lunch program. However, an analysis of the program in the areas of purchasing, staff allocation, serving methods, among others, should determine ways to move (or keep) the food service program to (in) the black. The goal should be to keep the program in the black.

***Q49) As an example, let's assume that you are not familiar with the "Race to the Top" standards for the state of Florida. How do you get up-to-speed quickly on such unfamiliar policies implemented in other states? Describe the method that you would use.***

Getting up-to-speed with Race to the Top is exactly the same as getting up to speed in any other area of leadership when one enters a new district. I have always utilized a transition plan comprised of a study of materials, meetings, interviews, research, and other methods in order for me to be ready to “hit the ground running” on day 1. In this day and age of accountability, districts can’t afford to wait months for a new leader to be brought up-to-speed. The expectation should be that the leader is ready to go on arrival.

That being said, it would be my hope that the School Board would develop its own transition plans for the new Superintendent so that they have a role in transitioning their new leader.

***Q50) What do you think about the Parent Internet Viewer (PIV) used in the Osceola County School District? What have you used in the past to keep parents informed of their children's grade status? What is the maximum amount of time that should elapse between the determination of an assignment or test grade and when it is posted online for parents to see? Please elaborate.***

I am in full support of technology to enhance communication between school and home. I have utilized the PIV as a parent and love its features in terms of keeping up-to-date with my own children’s progress. I have expected that availability for parents in my district. Policies should be in place to make sure updates are made to the PIV on a weekly basis with no more than 10 days elapsing between the time an assignment is turned in and a grade posted.

But, the PIV is not the only method of communication between the classroom and the home. The teacher still must accept the responsibility for contacting parents when the need arises and not pass that off to technology. Face-to-face (or phone) conferences and conversations are vital to the relationship that must exist between the teacher and the parent.

***Q51) How would you verify on a day-to-day basis that your policies and procedures are being properly implemented? For example, how do you know if teachers are handing out the questions and answers to midterm or final exams?***

The question which I will address here is how one verifies how policies and procedures are being properly implemented. Each employee has an area of work for which they are responsible. Secretaries are responsible for things like greeting visitors, answering questions, maintaining records, etc. Custodians are responsible for the cleanliness of the building. Teachers are responsible for classroom instruction which will have an effect on

student achievement. Administrators are responsible for making sure policies and procedures are being adhered to within their realm of building or central responsibilities. The Superintendent is responsible for ALL things that are happening in the district. I believe in a organizational management system which includes all departments under my realm to be knowledgeable and understanding about what each one is doing and the effect they have on the ultimate outcome of the district - student achievement. It's important that the Department of Instruction is aware of the challenges within the Budget Department. It is important that the School Management people know the Facilities issues. It is important that Personnel know what's expected in terms of Instruction. When everyone knows what's happening in all other areas, the goals are illuminated and each department works for the common good. Communication flows both ways – to and from the employee and to and from the Superintendent. In this way, the Superintendent knows what's happening and where there are breakdowns or problematic issues which need resolution. Determining ways to resolve those issues remains the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff.

The question which remains to be answered is 'how do you know if teachers are handing out the questions and answers to midterm or final exams?' or rather, is this a good or a bad practice. I would know because the information would get to me either through a parent, administrator, central staff member, Board member, or first hand observation. But philosophically, is this a bad thing?

***Q52) What plans would you implement to eliminate sugary products in school cafeterias and vending machines?***

It has been my experience that a district-wide wellness committee should be in place to recommend changes and improvements in current practices. Our District has developed a Wellness Policy that is focused on improving the health of students. The policy was developed with health and wellness advisory council that includes teachers, parents, students, administrators, guidance counselors, and the school nurse. Our partners in school wellness include the following:

- School Nutrition Association
- USDA Food & Nutrition Services
- Centers for Disease Control
- National School Boards Association
- National PTA
- Action for Healthy Kids
- American Dietetic Association
- Food Research and Action Center
- Elementary/Secondary School Principals
- National Association of School Nurses
- USDA Cooperative Extension
- National Dairy Council
- Society for Nutrition Education

- The National Association for Sport and Physical Education
- Council of Chief State School Officers

Each year, our committee recommends to the Board changes within district policy which include things such as cafeteria offerings and vending machine contents which the Board may or may not adopt, but which should be governed by a Board philosophy on nutrition and wellness within the schools.

***Q53) Given the state school systems are currently face with regarding bullying on campus as well as off campus, briefly mention:***

***a. What measure(s) have you implemented in dealing with this issue in your current position?***

We have a number of initiatives relative to bullying – Character Counts, Bullybusters, PBIS, etc. But the greatest program we are working to implement is Restorative Practices utilizing a community-based approach involving not only the school district, but the juvenile justice department, mental health facilities, police departments, parent organizations, religious organizations, and community social agencies. It’s a phenomenal program which will begin to take hold and grow nation-wide.

***b. What measure(s) you will implement across the school system to ensure the safety of all children?***

District and school-based safety committees, training for safety specialists, behavioralists and crisis intervention teams, to name a few.

***c. How will you ensure that this method is implemented in all schools?***

District-wide steering committees made up of teachers, administrators, staff and parents.

***Q54) What method(s) do you have in mind to deal with out-of-zone students?***

I am not familiar with the term “out-of-zone.” I will take it to mean those students who attend schools outside of their boundaries. If there are policies in the district which address out-of-zone students, it is my expectations that these policies are followed. If there continue to be issues with out-of-zone students, and the policies are not working, an evaluation of policies should occur to determine how to better address the issue.

***Q55) What will you do to recruit minority teachers to Osceola County?***

The recruitment and retention of minority teachers is a tremendous challenge across the nation. Many times it is due to the economic climate in the county, other times it has to do with the community and district offerings available to minority candidates, still other times, there are no minority candidates available. It is important to recruit in areas

primarily serving minority candidates. District's should examine the viability of things like signing bonuses and retention programs for minority candidates and minority hires. Finally, I believe it's important to start the recruitment in-house. What has Osceola County done to provide opportunities for minority students to become teachers and then to return to their home district for their career?