



Draper Notes

Superintendent's Comments at July 22, 2014, School Board Meeting

September 4, 2014

The following citation was taken from the board members' comment section of the July 22, 2014, school board meeting minutes:

(07.22.14, School Board Minutes)

Hollingsworth – Mr. Hollingsworth expressed a huge concern with the FCAT scores. He feels this will have a negative impact on our economic development. Dr. Gary responded to Mr. Hollingsworth's concern of the FCAT scores by stating that the scores have actually gone up, but not enough to make a difference in the school grade. She went on to say that the use of old textbooks not being aligned to the standards coupled with the fact that many students did not have a textbook certainly could have had an impact. Dr. Gary then referenced the purchase orders recently approved by the board for the new adoptions, and stated that these new textbooks are not only aligned to the state standards, every student will have a book.

The reader can only conclude that the prior student textbooks did not correlate with the FCAT standards and sufficient copies were not available for each student to have a personal copy. In short, the superintendent blamed others for the failure of the elementary schools in 2014. Perhaps we need to explore this a bit further.

The following points are submitted in response to this textbook excuse:

- The Heartland Education Consortium (HEC) includes the following six school districts: DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee. As a consortium, these districts combine forces to review and evaluate core area textbooks. Each school district, including DeSoto, sends teachers and administrators to hear presentations from textbook publishers that are on the state adopted textbook list. Each district then takes the top textbook recommendations back to the district for review and discussion at the school level. After school review, the districts then reconvene at HEC to make a final textbook adoption at the consortium level. I verified with the HEC that this process took place with the last textbook adoption. I also verified with the Florida Department of Education

that any core area textbooks on the state adopted list correlated with the FCAT standards that were current at the time of the last adoption. The textbooks in question were still within the adoption cycle and not classified as *old textbooks*. It must be noted that the state was assessing mastery of FCAT standards through 2014.

The new textbook purchases to which the superintendent also refers are correlated with the new Florida Standards (which are really Common Core Standards) which replace the FCAT Standards. The Florida Standards (Common Core) will be assessed for the first time during the 2014.2015 school year.

In summary, the superintendent was incorrect in stating that the last textbook adoption did not correlate with the FCAT standards.

I reviewed archived school board minutes, check registers, as well as, discussions with former district instructional and administrative employees that served on the HEC and district textbook selection committee.

- The superintendent also indicates that every student did not have a textbook. The district records clearly indicate that additional textbooks during the adoption cycle were ordered annually based on the schools' needs to insure that every student had a textbook. My research was restricted to those years prior to and including 2012 since the superintendent took office in November, 2012. Any textbook shortages during the remainder of the 2012.2013 and the entire 2013.2014 school years would have to be addressed by the current superintendent. If no additional textbooks were ordered during these years, the current superintendent would have to accept responsibility for the shortage.

In summary, there was no textbook shortage at the time the new superintendent took office in November, 2012.

I reviewed archived school board minutes, check registers, purchase orders, as well as, discussions with former district administrative employees that worked directly with textbook orders.

- **In conclusion, instead of attempting to blame others, the superintendent needs to accept responsibility.**

D. Draper, PhD