

UNITED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES OF PASCO

May 9, 2016

Mr. Kurt Browning
Superintendent
Pasco County Schools
Land O' Lakes, FL 34638

Dear Superintendent Browning,

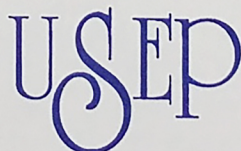
On April 28th you sent an appeal to all teachers requesting "high quality teacher(s)" to transfer from "a great school" to one of the "six high-needs schools (CES, GHES, GSES, HES, LES, and PES) that are under close scrutiny by the state and federal governments as they work towards academic improvement." Although, I believe, you did not intend it, this message was seen by the teachers at these six schools as an insult and an affront to the dedication, commitment, and hard work that they give day in and day out.

I would like to say, first and foremost, that these six schools are great schools with awesome administrators and staff. They love their students, and give their all to them. The facts are that these schools just happen to be located in a zip code that has numerous challenges, mostly related to high poverty issues that cannot be overcome by the teachers and SRP in the classroom alone.

As I stated at the May 3rd School Board meeting, "Yes, a teacher may be the most important factor impacting a student's learning in the classroom, but there are other factors outside of the classroom that far outweigh that of the teacher, such as the student's poverty level, hunger, homelessness, home environment, and more."

You will remember that at the School Board meeting I questioned, "Why would a teacher in a higher performing school make the switch to one of these six schools without knowing the conditions of employment prior to making the move?" I would also ask, "Why are so many teachers, particularly those without any job security, transferring from teaching in these 'failing' schools?"

You have mentioned both in the School Board meeting and in the press that the District has a plan for these schools. At this point, the District has not let anyone know what any of the expectations for serving in these schools will be. I would propose that teachers be included in the decision making



Affiliated with the
Florida Education Association,
National Education Association,
American Federation of Teachers,
AFL-CIO

P.O. Box 1098 (21322 Lake Patience Road)
Land O'Lakes, FL 34639

Phone: (813) 996-2119

Fax: (813) 996-6693

E-Mail: usep@useponline.org

Website: www.useponline.org

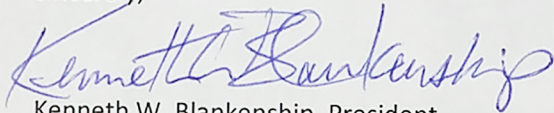


process involving this plan. There has been no communication with USEP in regards to the expanded working conditions, or evaluation conditions mentioned by you. All we know is that the District has been working on a Differentiated Accountability Plan since at least mid-February. USEP requested information regarding this plan then and has continued to make requests since.

These are conditions that will have an impact upon teacher's working conditions, and USEP could have been part of a collaborative effort to address the challenges being discussed in the ongoing planning that continues to take place. A successful plan needs to be collaborative. What has been in place over the last several years has not worked. It is definitely time to make some changes to the system that has been in place. In the past, USEP has been a collaborative partner in the process to develop a plan for Differentiated Accountability schools.

If we are serious about addressing the ongoing teacher crisis in Pasco County and the state of Florida, something must change. Teachers must be included in developing solutions. Therefore I am requesting that USEP be included in the discussion to improve these schools.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Blankenship, President
United School Employees of Pasco