



Duval County Public Schools

April 14, 2015, Board Workshop and Audit Committee Meeting

Ms. Cheryl Grymes, Chairman
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Vice-Chairman
Ms. Becki Couch
Mr. Jason Fischer
Dr. Constance S. Hall
Mr. Scott Shine
Ms. Paula D. Wright
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD : All Board Members were present with the exception of Vice - Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez and Board Member Paula Wright who both participated via telephone. Superintendent Nikolai Vitti was also present.

Call Meeting To Order

[Call Meeting To Order](#)

Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 9:09 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[THE NEW TEACHER PROJECT](#)

Minutes:

- Superintendent Vitti discussed the New Teacher Project (TNTP) and what the data tells us regarding work to build the capacity of our leaders. This program will tell us where we have been and where we are going in the future. Dr. Vitti presented a PowerPoint which is

attached to the minutes.

- Human Resource Practices - Principals are the key to keeping high-performing teachers and improving instruction.
- The Principals Institute mainly focuses on the new standards.
- The staff has a pre - meeting before every principals meeting to find out what is working and what is not.
- Continue to monitor through surveys.
- The district is more advanced in hiring and recruiting than ever before.
- Four main focus areas to improve the development, retention, and recruitment of high-performing teachers.
 - Pursue aggressive reforms to improve talent acquisition.
 - Invest heavily in developing the instructional leadership capacity of school leaders and their supervisors.
 - Improve the structure and implementation of teacher evaluation tools and processes.
 - Invest in curriculum and professional learning strategy to help teachers shift more effectively to the new standards.
- Teams are going to the mid -west to recruit teachers.
- Hold schools harmless in areas of charter schools because of loss of students.
- The evaluation tool defines what is working instructionally, what is not and how to do better.
- Professional Development is better aligned to work with the new standards.
- Liz Cutrona and Vihn Doquang from (TNTP) reviewed information from the PowerPoint. One of the cornerstones of the partnership with TNTP is the monitoring process. We do this through an independent validated survey tool called the Instructional Culture Index.
 - Growth over time - In Duval County, we had 40 schools that made one or more points of growth and 16 schools that had losses of greater than one point.
 - A quarter of our schools made big gains on the Instructional Culture Index.
 - Teachers agreeing with the person who did the survey is a number we will need to follow up with.
 - Knowing the criteria from the Value Added Model score and agreeing with the criteria is part of the survey.
 - Duval is behind a few points when compared to the national average concerning how expectations are set and how they are used.
 - The system will tell administrators how teachers are evaluated, who scores in middle, who has grown, who is effective and ineffective.
 - Hiring timeline has improved. Hiring earlier in July and August compared to the 2013-2014 hiring cycle.
 - Teachers for the the Duval Transformation schools are still getting hired later .
 - More teachers nationally are receiving offers earlier in the

year. 41% of teachers received an offer in June or earlier. In Duval County, 17% for the 2014-2015 school year.

- The Superintendent said the state looks at previous performance of a teacher and how they are expected to perform next year as far as growth for the evaluation. Other districts are more forgiving concerning teacher scores.
- Dr. Vitti explained changes in Human Resources. Our principals feel flooded with candidates so Human Resource will now be reviewing candidates through veteran retired principals to screen candidates upfront. Principals will now receive applications for candidates who have been pre- screened next year.
- The Superintendent said we need to continue to ask three questions. What is working, what is not working and how do we improve concerning the evaluation tool.

Vice - Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez joined the meeting via telephone at 9:10 a.m.

- Ms. Smith Juarez asked about schools that have had a big turnover in staff. Liz Cutrona stated they hope to be able to track this information in the future.
- Board Member Constance Hall asked the Superintendent if the Board had been sent a recruitment plan. The Superintendent stated he had not but he does have an updated plan.
- Board Member Becki Couch asked if there is a ceiling with the Value Added Model (VAM). How do we see growth if the student scores a perfect score on the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) the next year?
- Liz Cutrona explained that based on past performance the student receives a projected performance so the threshold for obtaining growth is smaller at the top end. That student would not get a perfect score the next year. It takes into account the previous years score.

[BOARD BUDGET AND POSITIONS](#)

Minutes:

Chairman Cheryl Grymes discussed the Board Budget. She sent out a copy of the current Board Budget to all Board Members. Discussion included the following:

- Board Member Scott Shine asked about the expense for the Value Adjustment Board change from previous years. (VAB). He also had questions concerning lobbyists fees.
- Michelle Begley, Board Internal Auditor, explained that the budget includes several years of catch up for the VAB fees. She will pull the details and send it to the Board. When you look at the budget you will see the largest part of the Board's budget is under professional

and technical services. Anything related to outside legal costs are in the Board budget also.

- Board Member Jason Fischer asked if it is a requirement.
- Michelle Begley said it can be shifted to the legal department.
- Board Member Becki Couch said there is a bill in the Legislature that takes the school board member off VAB but we would still be billed for it. Also a bill that caps how much can be collected. She will check on this and bring it back to the Board.
- Chairman Cheryl Grymes stated the Board secretaries salaries will be moved back to the Board budget from the Chief of Staff's budget.
- Sonita Young, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resource Services, provided a revised copy of the original position description to be considered by the Board. It is an exempt position. The current positions are clerical. We can create or use an existing position if one exists that would not just be clerical to meet the changing needs of the office. They would report directly to the Board.
- Board Member Constance Hall recommended we move Davala Hunter, Support Technician, in the Superintendent's office over to the Board office to handle Constituent Services in addition to three part-time, hourly, two that can do community outreach and one for communications, website and more.
- Board Member Scott Shine said we should look at what is not getting done or could be done better when concerning adding a new position.
- Chairman Cheryl Grymes needs direction on the job description. The question is if Davala Hunter wants to move over would her position stay the same?
- Board Member Jason Fischer said we could have a shared position. He feels we should increase our capacity in our audit function but each Board Member has different needs.
- Board Member Couch discussed how the Board budget works in Orange County. Each Board member has a budget which is used for travel, staff or communications. Any money that was left at the end of the year was given to a school program in their district. It would be great to have someone to attend meetings that Board members cannot attend. A Board newsletter would also be great.

Sonita Young confirmed with the Board that they wanted to hire one additional person to report to Michelle Begley. The three staff positions including the two we currently have will be reclassified to an administrative assistant position. That means all current staff would need to qualify for the positions. The positions will be posted.

Chairman Grymes would like to advertise outside of the district for the position.

Jim Culbert, Executive Director, Information Technology, was asked to look at other systems to replace the eAgenda system we are currently using.

Board Member Constance Hall requested chairs, carpet and technology be updated in room 613. In room 639, the whole look of the room needs updating. The Constituent Services program also needs to come back to

the Board office.

The Board Workshop ended at 11:51 a.m.

The Audit Committee meeting convened at 1:03 p.m.

OVERVIEW OF DISTRICT AUDITS

Minutes:

Superintendent Nikolai Vitti, presented an Overview of the District Audit for 2013-2014. A PowerPoint was previewed. Discussion included the following:

- Financial Audits happen each year.
- Auditor General's office does an audit every third year.
- The years we don't have an audit the district uses an independent auditor - Cherry Bekaert.
- Federal Audit happens every year. The focus is on federal programs, statements, review of expenditures and how they are in compliance with grants.
- Teacher Certification, Transportation Audit - Preliminary findings for 2014-2015.
- Operational Audit every third year.

2014 - 2015 FINANCIAL AUDIT

Minutes:

Superintendent Vitti discussed the audit process. Discussion included the following:

- Latrell Edwards, Chief Financial Officer, explained unrecorded liabilities. These were funds of \$4.5 million that were paid out but recorded incorrectly. We did go back and make the corrections.
- Timesheet approval process - The system defaults to present for attendance so everyone gets paid unless they are marked absent. We have now moved to technology and paper-based attendance.
- We are now checking and making employees accountable.
- More spot checks.

Board Member Jason Fischer asked how big of an issue attendance is. Latrell Edwards, Chief Financial Office, said it would depend on the school.

FTE, TEACHER CERTIFICATION, AND TRANSPORTATION PRELIMINARY AUDIT FINDINGS

Minutes:

The Superintendent reviewed the preliminary findings with the Board. Discussion included the following:

- We are improving. The amount linked to the findings has decreased in almost every area.
- Almost 50% of the audit findings are linked to Charter Schools double sessions.
- The district has less than 1% adjustment for the last four full-time equivalent (FTE) audit cycles.
- When you look at us versus the seven largest districts, we had the second lowest adjustments.
- FTE Audit focuses on Exceptional Student Education (ESE), Teacher Certification, on-the-job training, attendance, English for Speakers Of other Languages (ESOL) and Transportation.
- General FTE errors have increased mainly because of Charter Schools.
- Teacher Certification - The findings have decreased.
- ESE 2013-2014 findings - About the same.
- Update the attendance process and then link it to the accuracy of the evaluation tool for principals and region superintendents.
- On-the-job-training - A reduction in findings from \$15,000 to \$11,000 dollars.
- Discrepancy letters concerning out of field teachers - Principals must fill out the name and subject area for each teacher that is out of compliance. Some principals did not send out the letters or fill in the course information. Then we do not know who is out of compliance.

Board Member Paula Wright joined the meeting at 1:40 p.m. via telephone.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Minutes:

Superintendent Vitti discussed an Overview of the Internal Auditing Plan. Discussion included the follows:

- The Internal Audit Plan was submitted to the Board for approval as required by the State to fulfill the statute.
- There are three levels of Internal Auditing. Internal funds mainly at the school level, FTE funding and department functions.
- We have 161 Schools and four auditors on staff.
- It takes about 2 years for every school to be audited. Most are only audited after a problem arises.
- We need to have an audit whenever a principal changes or when we have a school with a history of problems over time.

The Superintendent recommended the Board have the Chairman and Vice - Chairman serve on an Audit Committee instead of the whole board along with business community members. The consensus of the Board was to continue to own the process.

Vice- Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez e-mailed the Board at the meeting concerning this issue. Her e-mail is as follows: After reading the PowerPoint, she appreciated the focus on tightening processes and maximizing capacity for oversight. Rather than adding community volunteers with auditing expertise to the committee, I'd like for us to be more proactive and leverage this opportunity on the front end. These community members could work with staff to target areas of concern or refine processes to be more efficient. She thinks it would be best to ask these individuals to assist us in being efficient rather than back-end oversight.

Board Member Scott Shine left the meeting at 2:03 p.m.

Adjournment

[Adjournment](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

CSM

We Agree on this

Superintendent

Chairman