



# Duval County Public Schools

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February 10, 2015, Special Board Meeting - Superintendent's Evaluation

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 SPECIAL MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD : All Board Members were present. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent was also present.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

[Call Meeting To Order](#)

Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 1:09 p.m.

Topics To Be Discussed

[SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION](#)

Minutes:

The Chairman started the meeting by asking each board member to make a statement. The discussion included the following:

Commendations:

- Board Member Paula Wright would like to commend Superintendent Vitti on the following:
  - Reaching our youngest learners to post- secondary students.
  - The opportunities for increase in advanced placement participation.
  - The new branding that has taken the district to a whole new level.
  - Increase in technology.
- Board Member Constance Hall enjoyed talking with the Superintendent. It is an opportunity for development for him as well as myself. The following are her comments:
  - His courageous leadership.
  - Willingness to meet with all groups.
  - The energy and time he devotes to the position.
  - Streamlining college readiness.
  - Change in technology.
  - Upgrades to our operating system and how we gather data.
- Board Member Becki Couch stated the Superintendent shows courage and leadership qualities along with the following:
  - She commends him on the recognition of employee programs.
  - Raising funds for the district
  - His development of leadership because he has created four different methods of developing emerging leaders.
  - His innovation in course offerings and streamlining of the courses.
- Board Member Jason Fischer feels the Superintendent has established himself as an educational leader but does not get distracted by others trying to take the credit.
  - He is bold and decisive.
  - Focused on results which shows in the data with the graduation rate which has improved for the second year in a row, the highest in Duval history.
  - The Superintendent makes Duval County public schools public education strong.
- Board Member Scott Shine said he is impressed with Dr. Vitti for his educational leadership.
  - For what he has done with the choice initiative.
  - The Superintendent has worked to improved reading scores.
  - An innovator, and a reformer. This is why we brought him here.
  - Personal qualities, he can work in a political environment and he has an incredible work ethic .
  - Works well with the different personalities on the Board.
  - He has assembled an impressive staff.
- Chairman Cheryl Grymes stated the Superintendent's strengths are as follows:
  - Ability to be involved in the community and pull people together.
  - Gained a better awareness of public education and what we are doing in Duval County.
  - He has created a team in communications.
  - New branding has been good for the district.

- o The attention to the Career Academies for the world of work.
  - o Dr. Vitti works to have a good relationship with the union.
  - o His ability to back off if his ideas have not reached their moment.
  - o He is doing a better job of aligning our partners to make sure they fit into our vision.
- Vice - Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez stated the Superintendent has been willing to tackle big issues.
  - o The policy practice has started to change in school safety, discipline and how we are addressing mental health.
  - o The outreach to groups that are interested in education.
  - o The graduation rate, acceleration courses and the career technical programs.
  - o The Superintendent has the courage and willingness to do things different which was his original charge.
  - o Dr. Vitti took to heart the priorities the Board set especially the middle school reform .

Discussion on developing skills included the following:

- Board Member Hall indicated that going to the Master Board training will strengthen our relationships.
  - o The Superintendent needs to delegate more.
  - o Dr. Vitti needs to provide information in a more timely manner.
  - o Forecast long - term.
  - o Stakeholder satisfaction.
  - o Feedback can be given only with superintendent approval.
- Board Member Couch gave her recommendations for development:
  - o Work to create an environment where employees can talk candidly.
  - o Make the data more accessible on the website.
  - o Spend more time listening to stakeholders concerns.
  - o Continue to refine the flawless opening planning process so that materials are received on time so teaching and learning is not disrupted.
  - o Work to improve long - range planning.
  - o Define goals for 3 to 5 years out and redefine resources so you can measure our return on investments.
  - o More budget-friendly documents for the public to view.
  - o Succession planning for the release of the top cabinet to give presentations and be part of the discussion.
  - o Work to help schools throughout the district that are low - performing with staffing.
- Board Member Shine indicated he too would like to have the staff present information at meetings that are at the level of all individuals. He would like to see the following:
  - o Increase the rate of reform and change.
  - o The Superintendent gets caught up in things that are not productive .
  - o Have specialists who can look at data and look at what is fair for

- o our district.
  - o Have a level of peer review.
- Board Member Jason Fischer would like to see more development in the following areas:
  - o Organizational development with an audit focus.
  - o Morale of front line employees.
  - o Open enrollment needs to be developed further.
- Board Member Paula Wright talked about possibilities for the district.
  - o Professional Development for the Superintendent, staff and cabinet members.
  - o Communications.
  - o The need for release of staff to present information to board members.
- Vice - Chairman Member Ashley Smith Juarez had the following comments:
  - o Communication to make sure we are reaching all parts of the community.
  - o Educational Literacy, an area that needs great attention
  - o Listen more.
  - o Need to take time to reflect and look at his own development.
- Chairman Cheryl Grymes stated she too is concerned about morale at the school level.
- Board Member Constance Hall read the following statement:
  - o The Superintendent must act on the important role that a systems culture has on an exemplary performance of all schools. He must continue to work to understand the people in the district and community as well as their history and conditions as they move forward to support and achieve the district goals. The Superintendent must be able to improve the district's culture to align the work of adults through the district's goals of improving student learning and infusing the work with passion, need and purpose.
- Superintendent Nikolai Vitti gave his comments on the evaluation.
  - o He is visiting schools more.
  - o More personal time.
  - o Doing a better job with budget transparency.
  - o Concession plan.
  - o He will come up with a professional development plan to present to the Board.
  - o Morale is a focus.
  - o Literacy has to be an area of emphasis .
  - o Worked to improve relationships with the Board.
  - o Work on long - range planning.
- Michelle Begley, Board Internal Auditor, gave out the summative to the Board members to review. The summative is attached to the minutes. The Superintendent said many of the targets are tied together, such as school grades, which do not set well with him. He did agree to the targets but looking back he would prefer to not have the targets linked to school grades.

- The Board discussed the statement for the media. A statement will be refined and brought back to the Board.
- Vice - Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez will be attending the City Council Meeting tonight to read the resolution on requesting the City Council to amend bill 2014-723 which was voted on at the February 9, 2015 regular board meeting.

#### Superintendent Vitti's Contract

- Chairman Grymes will submit an agenda item on the March 3, 2015, regular Board meeting to extend the Superintendent's contract for three years with no increase in salary. Board Members Fischer and Shine were in agreement with the agenda item. Board Members Couch, Hall, Smith Juarez and Wright would prefer to wait until they see the student data report. The report on student data will be e-mailed to the Board today and discussed at the February 24, 2015, meeting.

Adjournment

[Adjournment](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

CSM

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Superintendent

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Chairman