



# Duval County Public Schools

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February 14, 2017, Board Workshop

Ms. Paula D. Wright, Chairman  
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Vice-Chairman  
Ms. Becki Couch  
Ms. Cheryl Grymes  
Ms. Lori Hershey  
Mr. Warren A. Jones  
Mr. Scott Shine  
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, and Ms. Karen Chastain, Chief Officer of Legal Services, were also present.

Call Meeting To Order

[CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 9:17 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[LEGAL PLAN](#)

Attachment: [OGC - Approp and Auth for School Brd Positions.pdf](#)

Attachment: [OGC - DSCB Personnel - rev.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Jason Gabriel, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel (OGC) provided draft legislation to add positions. Discussion included the following:

- This legislation will add more resources and support to the Office of General Counsel for dedication to the School Board.
- Three attorney positions will be added and a fourth position for paralegal/secretarial. The three positions will be a Chief of Legal Services, Attorney III, Attorney II, which would be a Labor and Employment attorney and an Exceptional Student Education/Student Services attorney, respectively.
- New positions would be under the payroll of OGC and their offices would be in the School Board Administration Building. The positions would be financially supported by the District.
- The draft legislation is ready for City Council approval.
- The Chief of Legal Services position is accountable to Jason Gabriel, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel.
- In cases where there is a conflict with a decision between the Superintendent and the Board, it could be resolved through OGC.

Chairman Wright, Karen Chastain, Chief of Legal Counsel, and Jason Gabriel agreed Board Members will have the ability to weigh in on the evaluation for the Chief of Legal Services. A template will be created for the evaluation by the Board.

The Superintendent indicated he does not feel this plan is the most cost effective way to manage the positions. His concern is if the work load is substantial it could exceed the amount of FTE. The Superintendent feels the most cost effective way is to pay through FTE positions and then, those employees would be responsible for the work. This would control the cost. At the end of the fiscal year, we can look at the body of work and if there is a need for more positions, they can be added. We run the risk of paying for positions at an inefficient rate compared to the body of work.

Jason Gabriel stated he can look at doing a reimbursement if it is more efficient.

Board Member Couch arrived at 9:51 a.m.

Vice-Chairman Smith Juarez suggested a report be provided annually from OGC concerning the cost. The Board will then be able to compare it to what we have budgeted. A report will be send to all the Board Members.

The Board Members will be contacting the City Council Members concerning this plan to add positions. Chairman Wright will provide talking points.

#### Speakers

Paula D. Wright, Chairman  
 Ashley Smith Juarez, Vice-Chairman  
 Becki Couch, Board Member  
 Cheryl Grymes, Board Member  
 Lori Hershey, Board Member  
 Warren Jones, Board Member  
 Scott Shine, Board Member

Karen Chastain, Chief of Legal Services  
Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

### J. ALLEN AXSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Attachment: [Agenda for Allen Axson Continuity Workshop.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Today's meeting is a follow-up from the Policy Handbook Subcommittee Meeting on February 18, 2017. Discussion included the following:

- There is no way to subsidize the three-year-old Montessori program.
- The magnet applications for J. Allen Axson Elementary will now go through the School Choice Office. This will take care of diversity and access.
- Parents who live in the former attendance area for J. Allen Axson Elementary receive priority status.
- No transportation provided for three-year-old students.
- The former attendance area is about seven to ten miles from the current location of J. Allen Axson Elementary. This makes it difficult for parents in the old attendance area to attend the school.
- Currently, there are about sixty students on the Kindergarten wait list.
- There are one 109 Prekindergarten seats at J. Allen Axson Elementary. Between Prekindergarten and Kindergarten, there are one 157 seats. This leaves very few open seats for students without continuity.

The Superintendent's recommendation is to discontinue continuity for three-year-old students. He is uncomfortable with the socio-economic advantage of getting into the program and then eventually getting into Kindergarten.

Board Member Couch attended the School Choice Expo on January 21, 2017. She learned that Normandy Village Elementary would be having a Montessori program for students next year. Board Member Couch requested the Superintendent have a conversation with the Board before adding new programs. Pearl Roziers explained that the Montessori program is a Choice program and not a magnet program.

Board Member Shine left the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Chairman Wright requested the Superintendent work on informing the parents in the old attendance zone about the priority status for J. Allen Axson Elementary. She also voiced concern for the Normandy Village Elementary Montessori program having an impact on the budget. The Superintendent stated there will not be a cost to add the program until the 2018-2019 school year. Chairman Wright is concerned about promoting the program at Normandy Village Elementary and then having to come back for a vote when there has been no discussion. She recommends

adding a Montessori program in each quadrant. Chairman Wright will work with Pearl Roziers to come up with a plan for students.

There will be no continuity for three-year-olds next year. The current three-year-olds will move up to four year old program but must apply for Kindergarten through the lottery.

Chairman Wright requested the principals of the Montessori schools attend a Board Workshop to explain the differences in the program at each school. The Superintendent felt the Principals would indicate they would want everything to remain the same. This could put the Principals in a difficult position.

Board Member Shine returned at 10:57 a.m.

Board Member Grymes left the meeting at 11:35 a.m. and did not return.

### ID EXPANSION

Attachment: [Agenda for QZAB III & Student ID Workshop.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Dr. Vitti Superintendent, presented a PowerPoint on the ID Expansion. See attached. Discussion included the following:

- Most of the schools use the same vendor for students IDs. The current IDs are not connected to Focus and the data integration system. Each school purchases their own IDs, so they are not able to use their collective power with the number they purchase.
- This system would be able to track students who ride the bus. We would be able to track who is on the bus and who is not.
- The District does ridership survey counts which determines our contract amount for a year and it allows us to know if a bus route needs to be discontinued. If we had an ongoing tracking system of how many students are getting on what buses, we could be more efficient with dropping routes or adding routes.
- Some schools purchase IDs and some do not. It depends on how the principals wants to use the funds.
- Information is currently entered from different sources. We could have all the information such as lunches, tardies, attendance, all in one system.
- There is currently no system to track volunteers other than a log at the school.
- There would be an increased cost of \$500,000 the first year.
- Schools would have the flexibility to pick their own colors, have the school mascot or logo on the IDs.
- In the future, the system will be able to add data to Focus, so the parents would know if the students were on their bus and if it were late.

The Superintendent indicated the District would also be able to save dollars because the District could negotiate a contract for the entire district.

#### Speakers

Paula D. Wright, Chairman  
Ashley Smith Juarez, Vice-Chairman  
Becki Couch, Board Member  
Lori Hershey, Board Member  
Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

### GOVERNANCE

Minutes:

#### Student Focus Groups

Board Member Shine met with students from Fletcher High School to discuss firearms at school. He feels we need to change the social consciousness. Seniors could be ambassadors for firearm safety since, at seventeen, they legally can purchase a firearm.

#### General Counsel's Opinion

Board Member Shine asked about getting an opinion from OGC. Chairman Wright will get with him at a later time.

#### Excessive Testing

Board Member Hershey has been contacted about excessive testing between Thanksgiving and Christmas. A constituent indicated within about sixteen days there was eighteen hours of District testing that had to be done. Are these State requirements? Are we overtesting at the District level? The Superintendent is always open to what else could be dropped. There was a lot of testing between the holidays because of mid-year exams. He suggested sending the District testing calendar to all Board Members to see if testing is happening aside from what is on the calendar.

#### Gifted Program

Board Member Hershey requested information regarding any changes to the Gifted Program. What was approved by the Board for changes to the Gifted Program? Constituents have indicated to Board Member Hershey that students will not be pulled one day of week for gifted services. The Superintendent stated the change is to provide gifted services at the home school instead of having a pull out program. Most parents prefer the self-contained model.

Board Member Shine left the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

#### Reading Language Arts Curriculum

Board Member Hershey has received many concerns from parents, teachers and reading coaches concerning the curriculum and the availability of

textbooks. The Superintendent indicated the only mid-year data he is concerned about is third grade. There is an opportunity to expand guided readers in KG-2nd. He feels there is a gap in these grade levels.

Board Member Shine returned at 12:44 p.m.

#### Bus Contracts

Board Member Couch voiced her concern with the contract the Board voted on at the February 7, 2017, Regular Board Meeting. The contract was not attached to the agenda item and it did not spell out the financial impact. It's a big commitment over ten years if the services remain the same. There is an out, with the one year clause. We should have had more discussion and been kept in the loop. If we need to have an emergency meeting, then we do. Chairman Wright will add bus contracts as a topic for future workshops.

Michelle Begley, Board Internal Auditor, was asked by Board Member Couch to review the Student Transportation Services contract. Ms. Begley suggested revisiting the cost and an understanding of the Request For Proposal. Dr. Vitti indicated the District did go back to vendors to negotiate.

#### Tip Line

Chairman Wright stated she has a lot of questions about the Tip Line, which was discussed at the February 7, 2017, Regular Board Meeting. She will get with the Superintendent at another time to discuss her questions.

#### Tree Planting Schedule

Vice-Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez and Administrative Assistant Cathy Maycott are working with Greenscape on the Tree Planting Schedule. Board Members will be notified when the schedule has been confirmed so they can attend.

Adjournment

#### [ADJOURNMENT](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

CSM

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Superintendent

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Chairman