



E-AGENDA MANAGER

## Duval County Public Schools

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January 27, 2015 - Joint Mtg. Jax. City Council

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 JOINT MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present with the exception of Board Member Ashley Smith Juarez. Jacksonville City Council Members: Mr. Clay Yarborough, President, Mr. Greg Anderson, Vice-President, Dr. Johnny Gaffney, Mr. Don Redman, Ms. Lori Boyer, Mr. Jim Love, Mr. Bill Gulliford, Mr. Richard Clark, Mr. John Crescimbeni, Ms. Kimberly Daniels, Mr. Warren A. Jones, Ms. E. Denise Lee. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, was also present.

Call Meeting To Order

[Call Meeting To Order](#)

Minutes: Chairman Grymes, along with City Council President Clay Yarborough called the meeting to order at 11:50 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[Choice Programs](#)

Minutes: Dr. Vitti gave an overview of the School Choice program available to our students/parents. He also noted the various recognitions the program has received. A copy of the presentation is attached.

## [City Charter Amendments](#)

Minutes:

Ordinance 2014-723:

Board Member Shine noted that the Board has a number of quasi-judicial proceedings. If the Council passes the amendment to Ordinance 2014-723, the Board is concerned about its ability to retain its own legal counsel.

Council Member Boyer clarified that 2014-723 did not get voted out of Rules Committee; instead it was discussed. The purpose of the amendment is to clarify language pertaining to the appointment of general counsel, not make any changes to it. She explained that the amendment addresses:

1. Who votes to approve General Counsel.
2. The selection process.
3. How long an acting General Counsel can fill the position.

These three items have very little impact on the School Board. There was discussion of use of independent counsel for independent agencies.

Board Member Fischer expressed his concern about a lack of accountability when it comes to General Counsel. It not only looks like a consolidation of government, but also a consolidation of power. He doesn't want the Board to be subject to a mayor's whims who isn't connected to the School Board.

Board Member Shine rhetorically asked if this amendment moves government closer to the people or farther away. Are we serving a rule or is the rule serving us?

Board Member Couch asked that if the amendment goes through, would it eliminate the Board's ability to maintain our legal counsel in the Board office. Council Member Boyer answered it would not.

Ms. Boyer assured the board that the letter they have from General Counsel protecting their ability to maintain legal counsel is binding unless overruled by a court. Ms. Couch asked who vets any potential General Counsel and would anyone from DCSB be part of it. Ms. Boyer explained it is two past presidents of the Bar, two members of the Board of Governors and two former General Counsels. The vetting is to be done after consulting with the independent agencies.

Ordinance 2014-747-E

Mr. Fischer asked what the reason was behind Bill 2014-747. He views it as another layer of government.

Council Member Crescimbeni, who sponsored the bill, explained that the City had an Inspector General located in the Mayor's suite. He supported the defunding of the Inspector General due to its lack of independence. This bill establishes an independent Inspector General that is not under the Council or the City. Council Member Gulliford disagrees that it is another layer of government. He feels it is very necessary and is in favor of what they've done.

Ms. Daniels said auditing needs to be more focused on the School Board and how it handles its money.

#### [Joint Use](#)

Minutes:

Mr. Yarborough gave examples of current joint use agreements.

Mr. Soares, Chief Officer of Operations, gave background and history of joint use agreements.

#### [Issues That Impact Growth, Funding And The Students and Citizens Of Duval County](#)

Minutes:

Mr. Shine expressed concern that both groups are not talking to each other. Duval County School Board (DCSB) is a very large employer. If City Council passed legislation that affected other large employers, the City Council would have called them. He wants to keep the dialogue open between both groups. Ms. Boyer pointed out that someone from DCPS should read what Council is putting out and that we need to communicate better in both directions.

Mr. Crescimbeni pointed out that both groups are set up electronically. Each group should be able to send their materials to the other.

Mr. Jones said that, as with legislation, both groups also need to improve communication in the area of joint use agreements.

Ms. Grymes noted when she served on the School Board years ago they had liaisons between DCSB and City Council. She encouraged everyone to strengthen communication in spite of being very busy.

Ms. Daniels asked Dr. Vitti to reflect on how the boundary changes at

Butler will affect other schools and whether there is a safety net in place to protect them.

Dr. Vitti explained students in the Butler neighborhood had to opt in. If they didn't, they go to other nearby schools. He doesn't see a major change in enrollment patterns.

Ms. Wright asked Dr. Vitti to share more about Eugene Butler Middle School with the City Council.

Adjournment

[Adjournment](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

LBL

We Agree on this

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Superintendent

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Chairman