



E-AGENDA MANAGER

## Duval County Public Schools

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July 19, 2017, Special Board Meeting

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. Patricia S. Willis, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present with the exception of Board Member Cheryl Grymes. Dr. Patricia S. Willis, Superintendent, and Ms. Karen Chastain, Office of General Counsel, was also present.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

[CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m.

Topics To Be Discussed

[PUBLIC COMMENT](#)

Minutes:

Chris Guerrieri, Duval County Public School Teacher

Mr. Guerrieri read from an article in the Beaches Leader concerning HB 7069. He wanted to know if other Board Members felt a strategic

advantage to House Bill 7069 since it states that union member teachers would lose their jobs. As a teacher, he feels this is reprehensible and that overall the bill is a disaster. In his opinion, the Board would have already voted to join the lawsuit concerning HB 7069 if they did not have a close relationship to Gary Chartrand, State Board of Education Member. He reminded the Board of who they represent.

Bernadette Miron, League of Women Voters

Ms. Miron, represents the League of Women Voters who are opposed to HB 7069. She discussed a recent editorial in which Jason Fischer, State House District 16 Representative, discussed the benefits of HB 7069.

Stacie Dern, Teacher, Duval County Public Schools

Ms. Dern, is a teacher at a Title I school with low enrollment. She stated HB 7069 will directly affect the funding to her school because of how funds will be disbursed.

Tameka Gaines Holly, Friends of Northwest Jacksonville Schools

Ms. Gaines Holly represents Friends of Northwest Jacksonville Schools. She would like to encourage the Board to join other school districts in the fight to oppose HB 7069. They believe the District should have the ability to build and manage their own schools.

#### [HOUSE BILL 7069](#)

Minutes:

Dr. Patricia S. Willis, Superintendent, provided a recap of where the District stands in relation to HB 7069.

- Northwestern Middle, Matthew Gilbert Middle, Arlington Middle, Lake Forest, George Washington Carver and Arlington Heights Elementary are the most vulnerable to closing. The Superintendent stated the State is not going to require the District to make any changes for the next year school year.
- Northwestern Middle School will continue to move forward with the Computer Academy next year. No resources will be cut.
- Northwestern, Matthew Gilbert Middle and Lake Forest Elementary Schools are still subject to a takeover if they do not make a "C" next year.

Karen Chastain, Office of General Counsel, explained that earlier this month Broward County authorized the School Board to initiate litigation and provided a budget of \$25,000. Other school districts may join them. Broward is looking at hiring outside counsel. If the Duval County School Board decides to join them, one firm would represent everyone. There is

precedent to support a legal challenge. If a decision were made today a preliminary budget would be needed, authorization to litigate and file suit concerning HB 7069. The Board would also need to request that she work with Jason Gabriel, General Counsel, and come back to the Board on whether the Duval County School Board would retain their own counsel or participate with other Districts. Litigation could take a year or more. She can provide updates, even if the District does not participate. There are law firms that have expressed interest in representing the District at a drastically reduced rate.

Board Member Couch suggested the Office of General Counsel (OGC) explore the particulars involved if the District were to sue the State. She felt there could be consequences if the District took action.

The contact person for HB 7069 is Adam Miller, Executive Director, Office of Independent Education. Mr. Miller can be contacted by emailed at [adam.miller@fldoe.org](mailto:adam.miller@fldoe.org) or phone at 850-245-0502.

Vice-Chairman Smith Juarez would like to see the Board work with the legislators first. She indicated that if the State were to take action to close a school based on this bill, she would take action. She would stand at the door of the school, she will open it for children, she will welcome our teachers and Jason Fischer, State House District 16, can come lock the door or his colleagues who voted for this bill. She made it clear that she will not vote to close schools under the provisions of this bill.

Board Member Shine indicated he is not in favor of taking action against the State. He feels if the Board takes action they will be fueling the fire. If the District participates in this law suit there will be more repercussions and the legislators will just put more money into charter schools. He stated legislators had no idea of the implications of what this bill was going to do.

Chairman Wright strongly encouraged the Board to join the law suit against HB 7069. Her hope is that the Board would at least give express authorization to review the process. She wants to send a stronger message, whether it is advocacy or litigation.

Board Member Shine requested the Board meet with the Duval Delegation to talk about what we can do concerning HB 7069.

Board Member Shine left the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

Board Member Hershey stated we have done everything we can do. It is time to stand up to Tallahassee. She ran for this office because she believes in public education and would like to see us move forward.

Board Member Jones stated this is a constitutional issue. He would also like to explore other options.

Vice-Chairman Smith Juarez suggested working with Karen Chastain to bring forward a new resolution to include concerns with HB 7069. She

would also like to schedule community meetings to explain the bill to the community.

Board Member Shine returned to the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

The Board agreed unanimously to expressly authorize OGC to explore the litigation process, timeline and cost.

Ms. Chastain will work with the Chair to schedule the next meeting.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

CSM

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Superintendent

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Chairman