



## Duval County Public Schools

---

March 11, 2014, Board Workshop

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

ATTENDANCE AT THIS WORKSHOP OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present, with the exception of Mr. Jason Fischer. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, and Ms. Karen Chastain, Chief of Legal Services, were also present.

Call Meeting To Order

### [CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes:

The Chairman called the Board Workshop to order at 11:53 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

### [1. GOVERNANCE](#)

Minutes:

The following items were discussed during Governance:

- Board Member Hall requested that the Superintendent start providing the Board with a weekly update on the accreditation process. He indicated that the schools had not been selected by the accreditation team, and that he would let the Board know as soon as he has the list. Board Member Wright asked about the meetings with the Board. The Superintendent shared that the first meeting was with the Board only, and he would not be present. However, he will be present at the exit meeting.
- Board Member Hall asked if the BMR process had changed, since she had received several on Friday. Dr. Vitti said the process had not changed, and that it was just a coincidence that several came at one time.
- Chairman Couch asked for clarification on the process for the budget community meetings, which start tonight. After discussion, it was decided that there would be a table at the front of the auditorium, on the floor, along with several chairs and a couple of microphones. The Board did not want to be seated on a stage. Yellow cards will be distributed to collect questions from the audience. After the PowerPoint presentation, which should last about 20 minutes, they will then respond to the questions submitted by the audience. The same setup will be used for all of the meetings.
- Chairman Couch shared that she had spoken to the Superintendent and to John Sullivan, the legislative liaison, last night about next week's trip to Tallahassee. Mr. Sullivan has blocked off time on the Duval Delegation members calendars, however, if anyone would like to meet with other legislators, he needs to know today so that he can arrange the meetings. Board Member Hall shared information on her and Board Member Wright's recent trip to Washington, DC, and that they were organized and went as a team. The Chairman asked that the Superintendent share the final legislative agenda materials with the Board Secretary so that she can prepare copies for them to take to Tallahassee.
- Chairman Couch asked that future expulsion packets contain a follow up column, so that the Board can see what has happened with students who have appeared before them for discipline issues. This will help them gauge how effective they are in handling the cases.
- Dates for future expulsion hearings were discussed. The date of March 28, 2014, at 9:00 a.m., was selected to hear one of the cases pending. The date of April 23, 2014, at 9:00 a.m., was selected to hear three more cases.
- Chairman Couch asked the Board about an e-mail she had sent regarding a meeting with JPEF on April 9, 2014, at 4:30 p.m., at the Cummer. There would be a meeting from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., followed by a social hour. The evening would end at 6:30 p.m. Board Member Wright inquired as to the purpose of the meeting. The Chairman shared that it would be to discuss the QEA initiative and the role of the JPEF Board. Board Member Grymes also questioned the need to meet, and indicated that she is comfortable with the Chairman attending the JPEF meetings and reporting back to the Board. Board Member Hall said if there was a purpose to the meeting, then she was fine with attending. Board Member Juarez was also ok with the meeting. Board Member Grymes asked about the ability of their Board to answer questions, since she understood there was a QEA task force. The Superintendent shared that some of the members did serve on the task force, but others would not be as familiar. Chairman Couch said she would ask for the members of the task force to attend.

### Speakers:

Ms. Becki Couch, Board Chairman  
Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee, Board Member  
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Board Member  
Dr. Constance S. Hall, Board Member  
Ms. Cheryl Grymes, Board Vice-Chairman  
Ms. Paula D. Wright, Board Member  
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

## 2. BUDGET

### Minutes:

The following items were discussed:

- Fund Balance Policy - the Superintendent reviewed the need for a Fund Balance Policy with the Board and provided them with background information, a copy of which is attached to the Minutes. After discussion, the Board decided that they liked the proposal for this policy, and would take this up during the Policy Handbook review. The Chairman asked that the review start with the section on Budget and Finance. The proposed Debt Management Policy will also be considered during the upcoming policy review process. The Chairman asked the Superintendent what he was looking at for a fund balance. He indicated that he would like the fund balance to be between 4% - 5%.
- PowerPoint for budget Community Meetings - the Superintendent asked the Board for input. Board Member Lee would like for the targets to be copied as a take away for the audience, and asked that the Superintendent not spend a lot of time explaining these slides, as there was so much information to absorb. All agreed and the handout will be prepared for future meetings. The Superintendent will only touch briefly on the slides during the presentation. Chairman Couch asked that we also provide information on the legislative agenda and tell people where they can go to find information and contact their legislators. Board Member Juarez asked that we make it clear on the slide of possible solutions that these items are only for discussion and no decisions have been made. A copy of the PowerPoint is attached to the Minutes.
- Feeder Pattern Alignment - The Superintendent reviewed the handout with the Board. A copy is attached to the Minutes. Board Member Grymes asked about staffing for the new programs. The Superintendent shared that there would be a minimum of additional staffing needed. Board Member Hall asked about funding. The Superintendent explained the sources for the funding. Dr. Hall asked if we would have curriculum writers this summer, and the Dr. Vitti indicated that we would. Board Member Wright asked how the open enrollment would impact the increase of staff and equipment at some of the schools. The Superintendent said that once the dates for open enrollment were closed, they would then be able to make adjustments. Board Member Juarez would like to discuss the middle school years and how they connect to the high schools - where

- is the best break for transition of students - at a future workshop.
- Recommendations/Requests from Board - Budget - the Superintendent said he had received the following from Board member so far - foreign language at all middle schools; iReady; class size and clear parameters - both core and elective classes - parent notification process; school allocation for large elementary, middle, and high schools; safety and discipline; ATOSS; burn rate; and, use of one time monies. He asked if there were any other areas.
    - Board Member Lee would like to see mapping of one time monies and show what programs are no longer there because of the end of funding.
    - Board Member Hall would like to see a needs assessment, both school based and administration. She also requested an updated School Allocation report. Dr. Hall also asked that the Superintendent show what will come off the plate for any new initiatives.
    - Board Member Juarez would like to see a list of all initiatives.
    - Chairman Couch would like to see how many additional positions were added to the budget after leveling of classes. She also asked about caps on electives and what it would look like, and what courses would be eliminated.
    - Chairman Couch suggested that staff look at the retired military community when recruiting for our district.
    - Board Member Wright also suggested that the retired administrators mentor program be re-established.
    - Board Member Hall asked that we remember we are here to do the best for the students, and that we all bring talent to the table. She shared that the Board Auditor, Michelle Begley, also brings talent to the table and that we need to use her talents and work as a team. She shared that Ms. Begley was here to help and not hinder the process. Board Member Grymes shared that she wondered why Board members asked questions last year of Ms. Begley instead of asking the Superintendent or CFO, and was confused about her role. Board Member Hall suggested that she meet with Ms. Begley and that would help clarify. Chairman Couch shared that she was working with Ms. Begley on job descriptions. The Superintendent said he understood the role of the Auditor and that it was to bring a different perspective to the process, and that he has respect for the role and for Ms. Begley and her knowledge. He asked that we work together more closely this year. He acknowledged that both and the Board could have done things better last year. After discussion, it was decided that he and his staff would provide Ms. Begley with information in a timely manner so that she could review the data prior to sending it to the Board. He asked that she do the same with him and his staff. Information for meetings will be provided to the Board 3-5 days prior to the meeting, so both sides will need sufficient time to review information together and discuss any differences. It was also agreed that even if there was a disagreement on the information provided, it would still come to the Board for their review.

Speakers:

Ms. Becki Couch, Board Chairman  
Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee, Board Member

Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Board Member  
Dr. Constance S. Hall, Board Member  
Ms. Cheryl Grymes, Board Vice-Chairman  
Ms. Paula D. Wright, Board Member  
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Minutes:

The Chairman adjourned the Board Workshop at 3:21 p.m.

BSC

We Agree on this

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman