



E-AGENDA MANAGER

Duval County Public Schools

May 17, 2017, Special Board Meeting Continuation 1

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. Vice-Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez participated via telephone. Ms. Karen Chastain, Chief Officer of Legal Services, was also present.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

[CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes: The meeting reconvened at 8:16 a.m.

Topics To Be Discussed

[BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION VIA INTERACTIVE VIDEO AND OR/TELEPHONE SYSTEMS](#)

Minutes:

Motions:

That The Duval County School Board
Approve The Participation Of Vice-

Chairman Ashley Smith Juarez Via Interactive Video And/or Telephone Systems.	- PASS
Vote Results	
Motion: Warren Jones	
Second: Rebecca Couch	
Rebecca Couch	- Aye
Cheryl Grymes	- Aye
Lori Hershey	- Aye
Warren Jones	- Aye
Ashley Juarez	- Not Present
Scott Shine	- Aye
Paula Wright	- Aye

[REVIEW AND SELECTION OF INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT](#)

Minutes:

No Public Comments were given.

Chairman Wright introduced Andrea Messina, Executive Director, Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) to facilitate the interviews for the two candidates for Interim Superintendent. Each candidate will be given 3 to 5 minutes for introductions and 20 to 30 minutes for questions.

Dr. Patricia Willis is a native of Jacksonville, She retired in June 2012 after 35 years with the District. Her interest in this position is that this is her home and she wants to give back to the community. Her positions with the Duval County Public Schools have included the following: Teacher, Vice-Principal, Principal, Assistant Principal, Chief Operating Officer for the Schultz Center, Director of Professional Development and Deputy Superintendent. She has been consulting in Florida and Georgia since working with the Duval County Public Schools.

Board Members asked the following questions of Dr. Willis:

- Board Member Hershey
 - Please explain your experience in helping to develop and balance a District budget? She would compare the funding from one year to the next. Next she would look at each of the departments, Regional Superintendents and department heads.

Where are we? What funding would be coming to these departments? What areas do we need to think about? If funding is going to be short or if we have additional funding, where would that go? Look at some Strategic Abandonment. Where are the vacancies or would we be filling these vacancies? Look at the allocation funding for our schools. Go through several iterations to see what the funding would look like. Work with the Board. Look at what we need to do for our schools and our students?

- Board Member Couch
 - We are facing Florida House Bill 7069, we could possibly face three school closures as early as next year if the school grades do not improve. What would be your plan to either improve the schools or present an alternative based on what we have been given with turnaround schools? If possible, she would continue to work with the principals, the leadership, and the teachers to improve their school. She would look at which schools would be impacted and what resources and materials the District has provided. How do we provide to the State Department an alternative to keep these schools open and continue to move them in the right direction.
- Board Member Shine
 - As an Interim Superintendent how would you see your role in terms of either preserving the reform movement and following the playbook that Superintendent Vitti has been following or embarking in a different direction? She does not feel it would be wise to start in a different direction. We have seen the improvements that have been made in the District. She would look at what has been put in place. There may be some areas that need to be tweaked but beyond that we want to continue to move our schools forward in the direction we are going. She will be very sensitive to the fact that we have a permanent successor coming in place. There may be issues that will come up, but that is why you have an Interim Superintendent to keep the District moving forward. She will look at what Dr. Vitti has done and not necessarily make changes.
- Board Member Jones
 - How would you plan to improve teacher morale during your tenure as Superintendent? She is very sensitive to the fact that anytime a school district goes through this type of transition, it impacts the schools and teachers. She will make it her business to be in those schools, get the word out, speak with teachers, work with DTU with any concerns that may have come up. Find out what needs to be addressed. How do we deal with those issues to ensure teachers that we are continuing to move forward and that expectations are high and always have been.
- Board Member Grymes
 - What would you do first? She would like to meet with the Leadership Team and the Cabinet. Have additional conversation with the Board Members, either separately or collectively to discuss how they feel about the District and where the District is

headed. This will help her to move forward quickly.

- Chairman Wright
 - The Board and Dr. Vitti decided that our challenge is literacy. How would you create more energy and synergy around helping the improvement of your students on the literacy side? She would review the reading scores. Dr. Willis is a proponent of professional development and would want to know what training was put in place for our teachers of literacy and ELA teachers to make a difference with students. She would look at where the gaps are and how to address it. Professional Development will be critical because if we can equip teachers with instructional strategies that they need to improve our students in literacy, we will be able to do it. Let's look at the curriculum that we are proving.
- Board Member Hershey
 - How would you motivate your team to improve teacher morale? What do you do to motivate others? She would have conversations with the Assistant Superintendents and Principals. Hear from our DTU and our Fame surveys. Dr. Willis will be at the schools and listening.
- Board Member Grymes
 - What is your stand on Charter Schools or how you think the best way to work with them is? She would have to rely on her experience having worked with Charter Schools. As a District, we made every effort to work and support our Charter Schools. Some were not held to the same accountability as the traditional schools were, even with our students transitioning in and out. She would need to do some additional study on the number of Charter Schools that have come in. She would look at what the accountability is, and what authority the District would have.

Vice-Chairman Smith Juarez joined the meeting at 8:42 a.m.

- Vice-Chairman Smith Juarez
 - Questions for Patricia Willis were asked via telephone at an earlier time.
- Chairman Wright
 - How would you work with, not just our community, but the extended community? She is always reminded that these children are all our children whether you have a child at home or not. The District should partner with our community because they do have a part.

Dr. Earl Lennard is from Hillsborough County. He has worked with the Hillsborough School District for the past 41 years. He retired in 2005 and currently is a consultant. Dr. Lennard believes in this role he would serve to bridge the gap and keep things running.

Board Members asked the following questions of Dr. Earl Lennard.

- Board Member Grymes
 - What is your experience with building a budget? He would work with the financial team and the Board on the budget. At some point, our team has to realize we only have so many dollars to work with to still provide the services needed.
- Board Member Jones
 - Knowing the District has many challenges with our schools, how would you envision using partnerships? How have you worked with partnerships in the past? Partnerships is one of the most important areas you have available to the District, especially those that reach out to our schools. He worked with a group called Pastors On Patrol to develop the ATOSS program. They worked through a partnership to make it work for students to give them an alternative to being out of school. They also partnered with the community college to advance some of their students.
- Board Member Shine
 - In Duval County we have embarked on a very aggressive reform movement. How do you envision, as Interim Superintendent, carrying forward with this? Do you see following the playbook, making changes or a combination of both? He would probably work on a combination of both. The objective of an Interim Superintendent is the continuation of the progress that has been made. It also gives the Board another set of eyes from outside to look into the progress that is being made, the policies and procedures that have been put in place that have yielded performance progress. It is not the business of an Interim Superintendent to come in and turn things upside down or to disrupt. It is to continue the progress that has been made. The Interim Superintendent role should be to take advantage of the performance improvement and to move it forward.
- Board Member Couch
 - How would you prioritize the budget? This will be a process by which the overall programs will have to be looked at. Every programmatic area has its own interest at heart. We would need to look at the budget to see what impact it would have. We would need to bring everyone together with the best interest of the student. The budget needs to be made with the flow of dollars we have.

Vice-Chairman Smith Juarez left the meeting at 9:09 a.m.

- Board Member Hershey
 - Can you give us insight into your managerial style and how you motivate others. It is very important that we understand this is a team and in a team you have to have participation from all aspects of the organization. His leadership style would be to work with others, to cooperate and coordinate. Decisions have to be based upon input and information that is received from all aspects of the organization and in concert with

those who have to implement the policies and procedures that are made. He believes it is important to motivate and recognize the individuals who do the work. He rode in a garbage truck to learn why they have to pick up so early in the morning. It was because the truck driver would lose his place at the dump site and not be able to finish his route. Every job is important. This motivates because it shows you care.

- Board Chairman Wright
 - The Board and Superintendent have identified that literacy is our challenge. We are focused on ensuring that our budget reflects how we want to improve our academic performance of our students. How would you move us along during this time frame? If a student can learn to read early on, the chances of success are so much more heightened. He would have to take a look at programs and ensure that we protect those programs that yield the greatest results.
- Board Chairman Couch
 - What relationships do you still have in Tallahassee? He has a good relationship with many individuals like Senators Tom Lee and Bill Montford. Politics are not his forte. He thanked the Board for serving in their capacity. Board Members are the ones that have to stand before the public and the voters to ensure that progress has been made. He wished them success with the choice that they will make.

The Chairman thanked Andrea Messina from FSBA for facilitating the interviews today and Dr. Earl Lennard, candidate for Interim Superintendent.

Andrea Messina stated the Interim Superintendent usually receives the same salary as the current Superintendent since they are being asked to do the same job.

Karen Chastain reviewed the draft contract with the Board. She proposed the following: The contract would indicate the terms of the contract be basically flexible for a termination date which would be January 31, 2018, or 15 business days prior written notice for an earlier termination date, build in an extension of the contract if needed, add language that there is an understanding between the parties that the Board would be engaging in a Superintendent search. There will not be a mid-year informal evaluation process, a self-appraisal or annual formal evaluation process. She will keep the language about the frank and open communication language between the parties. No change for professional development, annual leave or sick leave. The salary of \$275,000 annually would be divided by twelve for the monthly salary. Some of the following benefits were also updated: Depending on the candidate, retirement if they are eligible to participate with FRS. Moving expenses are capped at \$8,000 and for temporary living expenses we have a cap of \$6,000 for a certain period of time. There would not be any type of severance pay.

Chairman Wright read the following statement from Vice-Chairman Smith Juarez: Today is an important decision for the board. I took the

opportunity to interview each of the candidates yesterday, including Ms. Roziers who had not yet withdrawn. Each of them is enthusiastic, skilled and capable of leading our district. That being said, I believe Dr. Patricia Willis is best for the position.

I want to extend my thanks to each of the candidates for his/her willingness to serve. I also want to thank each of our employees for the steadfast commitment to inspiring and preparing our students for college or a career and life during this transition. Together we do our best work.

Board Members thanked the Chair for listening to what the Board Members asked for in a candidate and for her leadership. The Chairman will work with Karen Chastain on the contract for the Interim Superintendent. The consensus of the Board was that Dr. Patricia Willis is the best candidate as Interim Superintendent. She made her role clear that she understands the role as an Interim Superintendent but she also said she will adjust accordingly.

Karen Chastain requested a Shade meeting to discuss pending litigation. It will be noticed and open to the public until the meeting goes into Shade. The Board Office will work on a date for the meeting.

Board Member Shine asked if a contract could be done electronically. Karen Chastain stated she would not be comfortable with that and does not think the law would support it. The Board will need to hold another meeting to vote on the contract. This could be done tomorrow.

Chairman Wright indicated that employees will be very pleased and accepting of Dr. Willis. She will be our first African-American female superintendent.

Board Member Grymes asked the Board to acknowledge Dr. Vitti, Superintendent. Chairman Wright indicated that we can acknowledge Dr. Vitti at the next meeting on May 18, 2017.

Motions:

That the Duval County School Board offer the position of Interim Superintendent to Dr. Patricia S. Willis. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Cheryl Grymes

Second: Warren Jones

Rebecca Couch - Aye

Cheryl Grymes	- Aye
Lori Hershey	- Aye
Warren Jones	- Aye
Ashley Juarez	- Not Present
Scott Shine	- Aye
Paula Wright	- Aye

Adjournment

[ADJOURNMENT](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was recessed at 9:55 a.m. until Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 11:00 a.m.

CSM

Superintendent

Chairman