



Duval County Public Schools

May 23, 2016, Board Development Meeting

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

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present except Vice-Chairman Paula Wright and Board Member Constance S. Hall. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, was also present.

Call Meeting To Order

[CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 12:29 p.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT](#)

Minutes:

Dr. Cathy Mincberg, CEO, Center for Reform of School Systems, focused on management oversight as the topic for the day with the goal being to analyze and reform the District's oversight calendar, if need be.

Through a PowerPoint presentation (see attached) she stressed to the Board that, although difficult to do, the Board is to oversee management without becoming management. The PowerPoint presentation helped clarify for the Board what management oversight is and is not. A management oversight spectrum was reviewed that showed the two extremes of abdication and micromanagement with the ideal management style falling in the middle.

There was discussion about the difficulty in the State of Florida under Sunshine Laws over accountability among Board Members and how the Chairman can or can not play a role. Dr. Mincberg mentioned that some boards will set standards or norms, then do quick self-evaluations after meetings to see how well they are adhering to their standards. Board Members were encouraged to discuss overall "big picture" ideals and not so much detail.

The importance of not allowing discussion to become personal was reiterated and the importance of the Chairman breaking that habit at meetings through invoking Roberts Rules, taking breaks, redirecting conversation, etc. Conversations outside public meetings also create issues which can lead to distrust. Dr. Mincberg made the point that likability or trust does not have to be present in order for Board Members to be able to work together if norms are established. Chairman Smith Juarez explained that by reviewing the oversight calendar and making adjustments as deemed necessary, the Board would give clearer direction to the Superintendent.

Concerning school visits by Board Members, Dr. Mincberg said it is important those get set up through Board staff and that Board Members not make the request directly to school staff.

Ideal effective management oversight is done through workshops, Superintendent reports, ongoing reports, Board advisory committees, and external audits. Boards with fewer items on their plate tend to be more effective and focused than Boards with an overwhelming number of items. Boards that preread materials, such as reports, make better use of their meeting times. Presentations given to the Board during the meeting should be succinct and cogent and no more than one third of the meeting time. Dr. Mincberg used Transportation as an example of what a workshop presentation should look like. The purpose of reports should be for monitoring.

[REFORM POLICIES](#)

Minutes:

Dr. Mincberg reviewed the oversight calendar with the Board to determine what they feel is important that they receive on a routine basis and what they could receive on a more infrequent basis. As they discussed each item, she asked the Board to consider the following questions?

- Does the item inform or overwhelm?
- Is it something that, once it has been presented to the Board, could be moved into reports until time for its next presentation?
- By having this much information, is it a sign the Board is micromanaging?
- Does compiling the information overburden the Administration and/or the Board?
- Does it distract the Board from staying focused on its job to strictly overview?

Board Member Shine noted that using a dashboard of information would be helpful in giving the Board the most salient information of an item without overwhelming them. Dr. Vitti noted the plans are put together to refer to when Board Members have questions about an item.

Chairman Smith Juarez asked that the Board consider what level of less information they would feel comfortable with. She sees the Board as possibly having a deep conversation a few times a year on Academic Services and within that conversation would be embedded several subtopics. Board Member Shine expressed concern that in the course of getting an overload of information, they run the risk of missing things they shouldn't. Having too much information crowds out time the Board needs to spend on governance and discussing the Board's work.

Dr. Mincberg noted to the Board that internal auditors don't oversee finance; instead, they look for problems. He/she should initiate a meeting individually with the Superintendent and Board Members on a yearly basis to find out what each one feels is important to be reviewed. The auditor can then put together a report of what will be audited. Once the audit is done and presented to the Superintendent for a response, the Board should get both the audit report and Superintendent response at the same time. There should be a process set up that is done on a routine basis to get direction from the Board as to what needs reviewed. Board Member Shine would like to see a similar process set up to evaluate Board staff. Until a process is put in place, none of it actually happens due to the Chairman position rotating every year.

Board Member Couch expressed frustrations she has had in the past on the timing of some items on the calendar, although it has gotten better. She prefers to review items in a proactive way rather than reactive. She opined that some reports don't necessarily need to be separate. Some reports could be embedded in a plan rather than separate. Board Member Fischer feels the Superintendent should be able to use the plans and reports to answer Board Member questions they have.

Dr. Vitti sees a difference between a dashboard, plan, and report. They have traditionally been trying to do all three simultaneously. If a Board Member wants a plan for something that the rest of the Board doesn't necessarily want or feels it needs, no one speaks up to say they don't want it. Dr. Mincberg said the Superintendent can chose to ignore it until

it becomes a directive from the entire Board. Dr. Vitti plans to bring more requests before the collective Board.

Dr. Mincberg made the point that when controversial items are on the floor, key points should be made by Board Members, then dropped. Commentary doesn't not have to be answered by more commentary, which prolongs meetings. The long dialogue rarely ever changes minds and the vote ends up going the way it would have gone earlier in the evening before all the discussion.

Chairman Smith Juarez stated she will make more of a concerted effort to gently bring people back on task during meetings. At today's meeting, she is hearing that the Board is agreeable to reducing the number of plans and reports that are presented to them. At Dr. Mincberg's suggestion, the Board reviewed each item on the calendar to take a straw vote on what should be in the form of a plan and what should be in a report.

Chairman Smith Juarez will work with staff to put together a more streamlined management oversight calendar to bring back before the Board. Dr. Mincberg suggested Board services call the auditor every year to schedule meetings with the Board Members to ask what their auditing concerns are.

Adjournment

[ADJOURNMENT](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

LBL

Superintendent

Chairman