



E-AGENDA MANAGER

Duval County Public Schools

September 21, 2016, Joint Meeting with City Council

Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Chairman
Ms. Paula D. Wright, Vice-Chairman
Ms. Becki Couch
Ms. Cheryl Grymes
Dr. Constance S. Hall
Mr. Scott Shine
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 Constance Hall. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, was also present. City Council Members present include: Lori Boyer (President), Greg Anderson, Danny Becton, Aaron Bowman, Anna Lopez Brosche, Reggie Brown, Doyle Carter, John Crescimbeni, Garrett Dennis, Al Ferraro, Reginald Gaffney, Bill Gulliford, Tommy Hazouri, Jim Love, Joyce Morgan, Sam Newby, Matt Schellenberg and Scott Wilson.

Call Meeting To Order

[CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[SCHOOL UTILIZATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION](#)

Attachment: [School Concurrency Planning and Implementation final.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Council President Boyer convened the meeting and announced that the meeting will be an informal workshop process addressing only the items listed on the agenda. There will not be a public comment period since the

bodies will not be taking any action today.

School utilization and capacity and the concurrency/regulatory framework
Bill Killingsworth, Director of Planning and Development, described the statutory requirements of the City's comprehensive plan and concurrency management system, including establishing levels of service and the requirement for the county and the school district to enter into an interlocal agreement on school concurrency. The Legislature has made school concurrency an optional comp plan element; Jacksonville continues to have a public schools element in its Comprehensive Plan. A Joint Planning Committee composed of city council and school board members and staff from both agencies is required to meet annually to review population projections and development patterns and plan for future school locations. School concurrency-related issues are addressed in the Public Schools element, Capital Improvements Element and Intergovernmental Coordination element.

Mr. Killingsworth reported that state regulations require school concurrency level of service to be calculated at a sub-district zone level, but permits available capacity from one zone to be shared or "borrowed" by another zone.

Board Member Grymes arrived at 12:19 p.m.

School Superintendent Nikolai Vitti explained that changing growth patterns has meant an excess of school capacity in some older areas of the city and a shortage of capacity in newer, faster-growing areas of the city. The district's maintenance backlog grows at \$5 – 7 million per year. He noted that the school utilization rate does not include certain types of classes such as art and music, and ESE (exceptional student education). The first remediation activity for school overcrowding is changing school attendance zones to shift students from an overcrowded school to one with available capacity. The next step is expansion of or construction of new schools. Both of those options require lengthy community engagement processes, so remedies cannot happen quickly.

Council Member Gulliford said that the School Board would likely hear a great deal of discussion in the future about the importance of keeping neighborhood-based schools because of their importance to neighborhood stability. In response to a question from Council Member Reggie Brown about school choice options and their effect on troubled schools, Superintendent Vitti said that the state law on open enrollment (beginning for the next school year) permits parents to put their children in any school that has capacity. Duval County's schools are well positioned to deal with open enrollment because of the variety of school options already offered (magnet schools, charter schools, etc.). The potential impact of open enrollment on athletic programs was briefly discussed; illegal recruiting will have to be closely monitored and reported. Mr. Vitti said that private school enrollment has been declining in the county and charter school enrollment is not growing as quickly as had been originally projected. Jacksonville does have a very high percentage of home-schooled students compared to the rest of the state. He believes that

good neighborhood schools are what parents really want, but the district has to be as efficient as it can with its limited resources and provide capacity where it's needed and shrink capacity where it's not needed.

Council Member Ferraro said that developers looking for areas to build homes that have available school capacity are told one thing by the district while residents and council members are told something different, which is very frustrating. Dr. Vitti said that the school district web site has official capacity information for each school (FISH – Florida Inventory of School Houses). In response to a question from Council Member Dennis about who has the ultimate decision about where to allow new development to occur considering school capacity for level of service, Dr. Vitti said that the school district is consulted by developers about where capacity exists and where more capacity could be created, but the City is responsible for approving new residential and commercial development which may or may not occur in available capacity areas. He also noted that when the district wants to add capacity it must be approved by the state, which looks at capacity on a district-wide basis and not necessarily on a sub-district basis, and therefore does not recognize capacity shortages in particular areas. In response to a question from Council President Boyer about what, if any, authority the City and School Board have to change definitions and processes or otherwise change the current system for measuring capacity and concurrency, Mr. Killingsworth said that the parties could revisit the Interlocal Agreement and make changes to deal with emerging problems, or could eliminate the Public Schools Element of the Comp Plan since that is now an optional element. Dr. Vitti said that commercial priorities tend to drive development patterns in Jacksonville and more communication and problem-solving need to happen in advance before developers buy land and build where it's convenient and profitable for them without regard to whether the school system can handle the resulting burden. Ms. Boyer advocated for reinvigorating the Joint Planning Committee to have these discussions and Mr. Ferraro suggested that the school district assign an employee to attend the Land Use and Zoning Committee meetings to see potential developments as they are discussed. In response to a question from President Boyer, Dr. Vitti said that the district is limited in how it can use its tax millage proceeds for operating and capital purposes. Ms. Boyer requested that the district provide the Finance Committee with detailed information about what millage rate the district can levy, how the revenue is used, and how the state's funding formula works.

[SIDEWALKS, SCHOOL CROSSINGS AND OTHER STREET INFRASTRUCTURE RELATED TO SCHOOLS](#)

Minutes:

[Hazardous walking conditions/Gabby's Law for School Safety](#)

Public Works Director John Pappas described how the City and the school district cooperate on identifying and evaluating unsafe walking conditions around schools (currently 57 locations have been identified by the state via the school district). Mr. Ferraro asked School Board members to ride

his district with him to see problem areas in the field that may not be apparent on maps and aerial photos. School Board member Becki Couch pointed out a dangerous condition on Argyle Boulevard and Old Middleburg Road near where the new toll road is being constructed – she fears that when the toll road opens next year and drivers attempt to avoid the toll by using surface roads, walking to the school will be even more dangerous than it already is. President Boyer said this is a perfect example of how development decisions are made that create problems that then have to be remediated. In response to a question from Council Member Love about how a City Council member or citizen can get a potentially dangerous situation added to the Gabby's Law list, Mr. Pappas said that they should be reported to Public Works which will then coordinate with the school district to convey that situation to FDOT.

Council Members Brown, Bowman and Becton all noted that charter schools are problematic because they don't have to meet the same location and development standards as regular public schools and are sometimes located in places that cause traffic and walking safety problems. Mr. Becton feels that the onus has been put on council members and Public Works to solve safety problems without school district participation. Superintendent Vitti explained that the school district's responsibility for charter schools lies in reviewing their financial health – the district doesn't have any jurisdiction over personnel, curriculum or facilities. The district will be happy to help a charter school solve a problem if they ask for assistance.

Joint use agreements

President Boyer reported that a joint use agreement has been adopted for Landon Middle School to make it a true community asset. Council Member Hazouri suggested more community utilization of school libraries via joint use agreements. Council Member Bowman said that funding is always going to be a limitation on what can be done because City use of school facilities puts an increasing burden on the Parks and Recreation Department to maintain those facilities.

[IDENTIFICATION, SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS](#)

Attachment: [COJ DCPS Joint Presentation City Council September 2016.pdf](#)

Minutes:

Homeless students

Dr. Pamela Davis, Executive Director of Alternative Programs for the school district, gave an overview of how the school district deals with homeless students. The federal definition addresses "fixed, regular and adequate" overnight accommodations. The district had 2,257 homeless students last year. 88% of those students were promoted to the next grade level and 67% of homeless high school seniors graduated. The district assists homeless students by providing a wide range of assistance to those students, from transportation to school supplies, waiving of fees, referrals to service providers, and the like. There is a contact person at each school to serve as a liaison to students to connect them with available services. Dr. Davis reported that the district initially identifies homeless students

via the school homelessness liaison (typically the school counselor), typically through self-reporting, either by the student or by a family member. Teachers sometimes identify the issue through conversations with the student. In response to a question from Council Member Hazouri, Dr. Davis said that the homeless status of a student is determined as of July 1 each year and must be renewed annually. A big problem seems to be the lack of affordable housing in Jacksonville. Families enter assistance programs and get on waiting lists, but remain homeless because there is a shortage of affordable units for them to rent.

In response to a question from Council Member Dennis about why homeless students graduate at a fairly high rate, Dr. Davis said that it is attributable in part to the many resources available to students via school staff and case workers, and to the ability under the federal McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act for a student to stay in their home school despite losing their residence in that school's attendance zone.

Information for future meetings

- Council Member Brown asked for information on the ability of school district teachers to work in the City's Jacksonville Journey summer programs.
- Council Member Hazouri suggested that the City propose to the Duval Legislative Delegation that the state law be amended to ensure that PECO funds are allocated fairly to regular K-12 schools as well as to charter schools, which seem to be getting a majority of the funding.
- School Board Member Wright asked that the City and School Board look at ways of revitalizing neighborhoods that will in turn help the schools there to be successful.
- Council Member Ferraro suggested that School Board members attend City Council member town meetings and vice versa.

President Boyer said that another joint meeting would be scheduled for January or February of 2017 and welcomed suggestions for topics to be discussed at that time.

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

CSM/JC

Superintendent

Chairman