



Duval County Public Schools

September 26, 2016, Board Workshop

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 MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present with the exception of Board Member Cheryl Grymes. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, and Ms. Karen Chastain, Chief Officer of Legal Services, were also present.

Call Meeting To Order

[CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes: The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was called today to focus on the strategies or tactics to become a better informed team. Discussion included the following:

The Board needs to look at hiring a mediator and set measurements.

- This could be delegated to another organization.
- The mediator should not be connected to the city or the community.
- Need a timeline.
- Create an agenda item for the October 4, 2016, Regular Board Meeting concerning the mediation contract.
- Suggested mediators are as follows: Bill Graham, Florida School Board Association (FSBA), Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS), National School Board Association (NSBA) and The Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS).
- The Board charged Vice-Chairman Wright with gathering the resources for the mediation services. The names and bios will be distributed to the Board on Friday, September 30, 2016.
- Mediation Services will be discussed at the October 4, 2016, Regular Board Meeting.
- The Board Members will work with the mediator one-on-one and as a group. The mediator will need to mediate relationships and expectations of each other and the way of work, understanding the charge of the collective body.
- There is also a need to set goals.

The Board should look at benchmarking what the Big Seven School Districts are doing and what the State is doing. Board Member Shine suggested hiring Diane Archer-Banks, Ph.D., Founder/President/CEO, Educational Access Institute, Inc. She is an expert in statistics, testing and realistic measures.

Board Member Shine suggested Board Member-elect Warren Jones begin participating at meetings. Board Member-elect Jones has been invited to attend all meetings.

Tom O'Dea, consultant, was recommended to work with the Board to set targets. Adding the cost of a consultant is a concern with the budget. Having a third party can provide another prospective and move the conversation. It is also the work of the administration. The point of impasse with the Board and the Superintendent has been how do we set aggressive enough targets. Setting of targets should have a timeline and relate to initiatives to move the targets.

The Superintendent indicated at a previous meeting that he would bring back revised Strategic Plan Targets. Information brought back to the Board did not reflect change. He stated that he did not make changes based on his conversation with staff. Staff was not comfortable increasing numbers just to increase numbers. Staff anchored the conversation to the true purpose of target setting which is why he did not change the targets. The Superintendent in no way feels that targets are a reflection of what he believes students should and can do.

Chairman Smith Juarez stated we need to set a bar for the children we serve. All children have potential, but more and more children should be moving toward what we know is the capacity and capability of all children. Chairman Smith Juarez and Dr. Vitti, Superintendent, did not

agree on the practice of setting targets.

Board Member Shine left the meeting at 10:21 a.m. and did not return.

Chairman Smith Juarez requested the Superintendent submit the following information by Friday, October 30, 2016: The Superintendent's expectations for what he has recommended, and the Board has approved, not compared to the Big Seven or the State.

The Chairman sent a letter to the Superintendent that referenced growing gaps. If gaps are growing but they are still narrower than they are across the State, this is not ok with her, not the bar she wants to meet. She asked the Superintendent to send the expectations separate from the comparison of the outside and central to what we are doing internally. Until she has an understanding, she is not sure what a third person can accomplish.

When the Superintendent came to the Duval County Public Schools he set targets and aspirational goals, what changed? The Superintendent stated he was ambitious and created aggressive targets. Staff felt he was unrealistic on what he had agreed to and that he was setting them up for failure. Setting targets that are not realistic other than matching the challenge is not something he wants to do again.

Board Member Couch indicated that the Superintendent was brought to Duval County because he was not afraid of the challenge. She felt the same amount of progress could have been made without the Superintendent. He was given everything he asked for. When do we expect a change? Her belief was that the Board should see results by now. For some of these targets it would take twenty years to meet them. We should believe in ourselves not back away after starting so transformational.

The Superintendent is proud of the improvements that have been made. We did improve in the 2014-2015 school year.

Chairman Smith Juarez indicated that in Board Development training with the Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS) cautioned against setting targets as a Board for our Superintendent. The Superintendent recommends and the Board directs and or approves that recommendation.

Vice-Chairman Wright is not in favor of hiring a third party to work with the Superintendent and the Board to create targets. This is the first time the Board has not agreed with the Superintendent's recommendations. She is not interested in the Big Seven School Districts.

Targets do not produce outcomes. The focus is what produces outcomes. Questions for this meeting were submitted by Board Member Grymes. She asked how can the Board work better with the Superintendent. How can the Superintendent work better with the Board? How can we make meetings more effective? How do we get to the point of speaking with one

voice? These questions could be covered more in mediation. Vice-Chairman Wright will keep these questions in mind as she looks at the scope for mediation.

Board Member Couch requested the Superintendent share the baseline data with the Board, update the Board with the enrollment count and revise aspirational goals.

The Superintendent indicated a need to rethink systems and processes as it relates to literacy for next year.

The Chairman requested a weekly update on the following topics:

- The number of teacher (UOPD), staff vacancies and the number of weeks that positions are open.
- The fund balance, since it has been borrowed against. Important to see where budgeted salaries to actuals are.
- Maintenance.
- The Superintendent's two working priorities for that week or most important things he is working or reflecting on for the prior week and what was accomplished. It's about getting the most critical things done that will yield the student achievement outcomes that we talked about today.

Michelle Begley, Board Internal Auditor, was asked to send the Board Statement out a second time to the Board. She needs feedback from the Board.

A letter from the Office of General Counsel (OGC) concerning Chris Guerrieri, Duval County Public School Teacher, and Board Member Cheryl Grymes, indicated it was written on behalf of the Duval County School Board and Board Member Grymes. Chairman Smith Juarez has contacted OGC and is looking into the letter which was not brought before the Board.

Speakers

Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Chairman
Ms. Paula Wright, Vice-Chairman
Ms. Becki Couch, Board Member
Dr. Constance Hall, Board Member
Mr. Scott Shine, Board Member

Adjournment

[ADJOURNMENT](#)

Minutes:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 p.m.

CSM

Superintendent

Chairman