



Duval County Public Schools

September 9, 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. 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 9:07 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[1. GOVERNANCE](#)

Minutes:

The following items were discussed during Governance:

- Board Member Fischer asked about the status of having speakers at our

Committee meetings, and if there was a for this to begin. Chairman Couch shared that this was discussed during the Policy Handbook Review Committee Meeting on August 28, 2014. Ms. Karen Chastain, Chief of Legal Services, is working on this and will bring back to the September Policy Review meeting for discussion. The merits of having speakers at the beginning of the meeting vs. the end of the meeting was discussed. Board Member Fischer is in favor of taking the comments at the beginning. Chairman Couch and Board Members Wright, Hall, and Juarez would prefer to have them at the end of the meeting. This would allow those in attendance to hear the discussion and make their comments based on hearing the item and discussion. There could be a hard stop to the meeting so that the public would be able to speak. The Committee meetings may be moved to the Board Room to facilitate this process.

- Board Member Lee arrived at 9:16 a.m.
- Board Member Wright shared comments regarding the employee hearings held on September 8, 2014. She hopes that we keep in mind how both employees and children are impacted and in the future be more aware of employees who are in distress and in need of assistance.
- Vice-Chairman Grymes arrived at 9:21 a.m.
- Board Member Wright talked about a postcard that Valor Academy has sent to the community. The postcard is for recruitment of students for their schools and talked about the public schools in zip codes 32208, 32209, and 32210, and how they are and that they are F schools. She wanted the Board to be aware of how certain of our partners are marketing the public schools. Dr. Hall said that partners should not tear down to build up. Board Member Wright shared how this group had been welcomed by our staff and into the schools in that area and now this is how they portray us. Dr. Vitti shared the Boards concern and will address this issue with them. Board Member Lee said this was uncalled for, but reminded the Board that some Charters, like River City Science, are great partners and when they talk about their school, say that they are part of the Duval County Public Schools arena.
- Board Member Hall asked if there was a date for transitioning the Constituent Services System back to the Board Office. Chairman Couch shared that she had sent an e-mail to the Superintendent about this and that he wanted the Board to talk about the shift again, as he did not think a majority of the Board was in favor of the move. Consensus was that the direction was to move forward. The Superintendent was concerned about how his issues would be placed in the system. The Chairman shared that those had never been part of the system in the past, but that his staff could still put those in the system. Ms. Bonnie Susan Cole, Board Secretary, explained how the responses were handled in the past. Chairman Couch, Ms. Cole, and Ms. Wendy LeHockey, Chief of Staff, will meet and work out the details. The switch will occur no later than September 19, 2014.
- Board Member Hall would like to have discussions next month regarding the Chairman and Vice-Chairman positions, so that in November, there would be a smooth transition. With the current policy review and Board development, we need to look at those two positions.
- Board Member Hall suggested we find dates for a joint meeting with City Council, as well as with the Duval Delegation. She also asked about hosting a reception or a breakfast with our key partners. We could invite their Chairs and share our

goals and our Strategic Plan and discuss how their organizations fit in order for them to provide us with support for student achievement. This has been discussed in the past. The Chairman suggested we discuss the criteria on who to invite. It was decided that the Superintendent would present his State of the Schools report at this gathering. The best time would be in January 2015. Discussion included making the event a ticketed affair, with some complimentary tickets for the Chair of the organizations invited. Board Member Juarez suggested tables of 10 with a Principal and teacher at each table so as to provide interaction with our partners.

- Board Member Juarez shared information for the 10 X event and will e-mail more information to the Board. The event will be held on October 25, 2014.
- Board Member Juarez shared the date of the International Walk to School Day. It will be held October 8, 2014. She encouraged Board members to participate and will e-mail additional information.

2. MARKETING/STUDENT RECRUITMENT PLAN

Minutes:

The Superintendent, along with Marsha Oliver, Assistant Superintendent of Communications, and Mark Sherwood, Director of Communications, provided the Board with a presentation on Marketing and Student Recruitment. A copy of the presentation is attached to the Minutes. Discussion included the following:

- Board Member Hall asked for feedback from employees.
- Vice-Chairman Grymes asked about the automated calling system and how we deal with the fact a lot of people only use a mobile phone. Mr. Sherwood shared that we do maintain a Do Not Call list. Chairman Couch shared that she receives both calls and e-mails, and asked if there was a way to indicate a preference. It was indicated that this relied on Genesis at the present time, however, there would be a way for parents to select an option in the future.
- Board Member Wright asked that Board Members be added as an option on the Speakers Bureau flyer.
- Board Member Lee would like to see us address the perception that some neighborhood schools are not as good as choice schools. He would like to see more promotion in the Northeast Florida School Guide booklet.
- Chairman Couch asked Ms. Cole to add a link on the Board's web page to the Speakers Bureau.
- Chairman Couch asked Ms. Cole about adding hyper links in the Policy Handbook that would link to the Florida Statute cited.
- Board Member Hall would like to have a list of resources on the Board website page for various organizations, as well as maps showing each of their Districts.
- Board Member Hall asked about pro bono help for the Tier I schools. Ms. Oliver said they were providing that assistance.
- Board Member Hall noted that we have an internal marketing challenge.
- Chairman Couch asked if an explanation of what could be found in each area of our website could be added. She noted that it was difficult to navigate our

website, and that the search engine did not work as it had in the past.

- Information was shared on the Public Education Strong program.
- Board Member Hall asked about the time line for implementation of this plan. The Superintendent shared that there was a kick off at Hyde Park next week. The Superintendent also suggested a launch during an upcoming visit to Butler.

The Board broke for lunch at 11:43 a.m.

3. LITERACY PLAN

Minutes:

The Board reconvened from lunch at 12:32 p.m.

The Superintendent shared information with the Board regarding the Literacy Plan. A copy of the presentation is attached to the Minutes. Discussion included the following:

- The Superintendent distributed a list of suggested members of an Advisory Board. He asked that the Board provide them with their input. Board Member Lee noted that there were a lot of names on the list and suggested it might be better to have a smaller group.
- Board Member Hall asked that we include parents and stakeholders, and that it needed to be a City wide effort and not just ours.
- The Superintendent will contact W. C. Gentry, a former Board Member, and ask that he take the lead. He has indicated an interest in the past, and was the lead for the Read It Forward program while he was on the Board. If he declines, it was decided that Betty Burney, also a former Board Member, to take the lead.
- The program will be connected to the District.
- Staff is working on a 501 C3 status for this program. It will be separate from the 501 C3 that would be for other school system projects.
- Board Member Wright suggested we invite local authors to participate in reading programs.
- Chairman Couch shared the program that Principal Donna Richardson had done in the past where the students would read a genre book and them dress in character and be prepared to discuss various aspects of the book. It was a type of competition, and she suggested this could be done on a system wide basis.
- Board Member Wright indicated that she would like to serve on the Committee.
- The Superintendent will come back to the Board with an update, and provide them with a time line.
- Vice-Chairman Grymes returned to the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

4. DROPOUT PREVENTION PLAN

Minutes:

The Superintendent presented information to the Board on a Dropout Prevention Plan. A copy is attached to the Minutes. Discussion included the following:

- Board Member Hall asked for an explanation of the graduation tracker. Dr. Vitti shared that it would list all of the students in a graduation cohort. Dr. Hall asked if it was manual or electronic. The Superintendent said it was manual. Mr. Andrew Post, Assistant Superintendent of Accountability and Assessment, said it was updated every week based on what schools submitted to Genesis into a student's permanent record.
- Board Member Lee asked what it meant when the Superintendent said we would train additional personnel. Does it mean we are training current employees or hiring additional employees. Dr. Vitti said that we did see more progress at those schools with a graduation coach, and while he was not making a recommendation for more staff, he wants to be transparent.
- Board Member Wright asked about the students in the Bridge program and their impact on their home schools. She believes that the home school Principals should have some input into the program if it will impact their school. The Superintendent will run the numbers to see how many students are from each school, and that this suggestion did make sense.
- Board Member Fischer left the meeting at 1:50 p.m.
- Chairman Couch said that we should be appalled at the number of dropouts from the Charter schools, and asked about the ratings the schools are to receive from the State. Dr. Vitti said the only one that had received a rating was Murray Hill, and it received a "maintaining" rating. Board Member Wright asked what we could do to hold them accountable. The Superintendent said we could do this through the contract, and that a number of them would be up for renewal this year. He will share a list with the Board.
- Chairman Couch asked if there was a way to better work with the Trinity Homeless Shelter. They sometimes receive resistance from schools when trying to place students. Dr. Vitti will work on this. Chairman Couch asked about students who are in a school and what happens when they become homeless. Dr. Vitti said every effort was made to keep them at the school.
- Board Member Fischer returned to the meeting at 2:25 p.m.
- Dr. Vitti suggested that we make the Charter school rating concern part of our legislative agenda.

Dr. Vitti asked Board Members if they had a chance to review the Dashboard sample he had sent the evening before. He would like to have their input.

Adjournment

[ADJOURNMENT](#)

Minutes:

The Chairman adjourned the Board Workshop at 2:37 p.m.

BSC

We Agree on this

Superintendent

Chairman