



Duval County Public Schools

October 22, 2013, Board Workshop

Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee, Chairman
Ms. Becki Couch, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Jacon Fischer
Ms. Cheryl Grymes
Dr. Constance S. Hall
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez
Mr. Ms. Paula D. Wright
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS WORKSHOP OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present, with the exception of Mr. Jason Fischer, who was out of town. 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 10:43 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[1. GOVERNANCE](#)

Minutes:

This item was taken last at the Workshop. Discussion included the following:

- Due to the previous meetings running over, the Board was unable to hold their Audit Committee Meeting. After discussion, it was decided to hold the Audit Committee Meeting on October 29, 2013, after the Board Development Meeting. If time allows, we will also have a Workshop to discuss IT staffing. The topic of Career Academies will be moved to the next Workshop.

Speakers:

Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee, Board Chairman
Ms. Paula D. Wright, Board Member
Ms. Becki Couch, Board Vice-Chairman
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent
Dr. Constance S. Hall, Board Member

2. DISTRICT HIRING GUIDELINES

Minutes:

The Superintendent provided the Board with a revised hiring guideline. He stated that while the Board does not have to approve or review the guidelines, he wanted the Board to know about the changes he was proposing, and be comfortable with the changes. A copy of the information provided to the Board is attached to the Minutes. He feels that our hiring guidelines as they relate to people who have felonies are more restrictive than other counties in the State. He also feels that it has an impact on hiring minorities.

Ms. Sonita Young, Chief Human Resource Services Officer, spoke to the matter, indicating that our policy would still be restrictive and that F.S. 1012.315 covers the major offenses. Both she and the Superintendent said that we were losing candidates to other districts with less restrictive hiring guidelines.

Board Member Hall asked if they had data showing the numbers impacted, and those that would have been hired if the guidelines were less restrictive. She feels that it is important when we talk about change to be able to substantiate why and what supports the decision with data, and that safety in our schools is important.

Vice Chairman Couch requested the data as far as diversity in our district for employees. She also requested information on our target goals for diversity.

Board Member Wright asked how we can state it impacts minorities without the data.

Board Member Juarez also requested information on the number of applicants disqualified. Ms. Young can provide the information, but staff will have to compile it manually.

Chairman Lee has no problem with the changes, but at what level do you let them be around children. If they are making the same mistake over and over, or are branching

out and making bigger mistakes. He would like to understand this change better.

Board Member Grymes said this would just give staff the opportunity to look at someone.

The Chairman asked the Superintendent to provide the Board with the additional information requested. We will discuss at our next Workshop.

Vice-Chairman Couch asked about Section 1 which addresses an applicants professional license or Professional Certificate sanctioned, and how far back we look. Say someone 8 years ago had sexually harassed a student and had sanctions imposed for the summer months, and then sought placement for a position above a teaching position. How far back do we look when we promote or hire. Ms. Young responded that there was not a timeline and that it would not be something we would disqualify a candidate for. This language is the same as before. Florida Statutes requires that we go to certain databases to check on an applicant, but does not require that we respond to an issue. Ms. Couch asked if there was any consideration on the degree of what had been done in the past. The Superintendent said no.

Speakers:

Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee, Board Chairman
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent
Ms. Sonita Young, Chief, Human Resource Services
Dr. Constance S. Hall, Board Member
Ms. Becki Couch, Board Vice-Chairman
Ms. Paula D. Wright, Board Member
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Board Member
Ms. Cheryl Grymes, Board Member

[3. LEGISLATIVE AGENDA](#)

Minutes:

The Superintendent discussed the Legislative Agenda with the Board Mr. John Sullivan, Lobbyist, was present. A copy of the presentation and the proposed Legislative Program is attached to the Minutes. Discussion included the following:

- The Superintendent reviewed the makeup of the Legislature and the various committees.
- The Chairman asked about our planned meeting with the Duval Delegation. It is scheduled for November 21, 2013, at 9:00 a.m. The Superintendent had stated that the meeting would be held at JU. The Chairman shared that he would like to have the meeting at a school. After discussion, it was decided the meeting would be held at Robert E. Lee High School.
- Board Member Wright asked about Representative Adkins visit to schools tomorrow and how it came about. The Superintendent shared that she had asked

to visit.

- Board Member Juarez asked if we were inviting any public officials to go on the Discover Duval Schools tours. Dr. Vitti said they had not.
- Vice-Chairman Couch asked about the Duval Delegations Annual Organizational meeting. The Superintendent said he would go and present what the Board had discussed today.
- Board Member Juarez suggested adding Dual Enrollment needs to the package. The Superintendent will add.
- Board Member Hall asked Mr. Sullivan to provide the Board with a list of hot topics. He shared that Common Core and the budget will be big. The Governor is expected to include the teacher pay/bonus dollars again this year.
- PECO - add mobile phone and internet tax as an alternative revenue stream as a possible solution, or let us increase millage by 1/4 mill. Will track FSBA language also.
- The Superintendent provided the Board with a position statement document for the items included in our Legislative Program. Chairman Lee asked that it be digestible and kept as short as possible.
- Textbook Funds - Vice-Chairman Couch said it was also on the FSBA agenda, but not sure it will be at the top. Chairman Lee asked who the major players were that could obstruct this request. Mr. Sullivan indicated that it would be companies like Mifflan and Pearson. The consensus was to continue with this item.
- Class Size - Board Member Juarez asked when we would have data. The Superintendent said it should be completed by the end of the week. Vice-Chairman Couch asked about students schedules changing 9 weeks into the school year. The Superintendent said he was including this in the position paper. She pointed out that the Legislature controls the penalty and could reduce.
- Special Diploma - Consensus was to leave in.
- Common Core - The Superintendent is in favor of implementing, however, he would like to see assessments aligned that has multiple states participating. Consensus was to leave in as written. The Superintendent stated that if it is implemented in 2014-2015, he believes it should be a baseline year and teacher evaluations and school grades should not be impacted and there should be no penalties.
- ELL - This item is gaining traction because Legislators want support from Miami-Dade. All were ok with this.
- Vice-Chairman Couch asked about school readiness. The Superintendent said this was more of a DOE issue, but he would add it to the program. All were ok with this.
- Chairman Lee asked Mr. Sullivan if he had heard about any topics the Delegation would be supporting, along with their likes and dislikes, and to provide the Board with that information prior to our meeting in November. Mr. Lee has heard about Representative Adkins interest in middle school reform, but is not sure what that entails.
- Superintendent Vitti said Representative McBurney had reached out regarding arts and music and would be sponsoring a bill to provide more funding in this area, especially at the elementary level. He said that he would help him with this bill.
- Board Member Wright asked the Superintendent to share what Representative

Adkins concern was with middle school reform and the Diplomas Now program. The Superintendent indicated that she has heard that students do well in elementary school and their performance drops when they enter middle school. She wants to know what is needed at middle school to help. We have Achievers for Life, Diplomas Now, City Year, Communities in Schools, and Talent Development Program. That is the purpose of her visit tomorrow to Gilbert and Fletcher Middle Schools.

- Board Member Grymes asked if there was anything in our program relating to Civil Citations. The Superintendent shared that there was not, however, Senator Gibson has proposed local bills in the past to expand the program, and would probably do so this year. Ms. Grymes asked that we support the bill if one is filed.
- Board Member Wright asked what the process would be to receive information from Mr. Sullivan. The Superintendent indicated that anytime a Board Member needed to, to feel free to call Mr. Sullivan at any time. Mr. Sullivan will e-mail his reports to the Superintendent, and he will then review, and tweak and refine the information, and forward to the Board. Board Member Wright indicated she was prefer to receive the information directly from the lobbyist and at the same time as the Superintendent. The Superintendent believes that as his employee, he should review Mr. Sullivan's reports prior to sharing with the Board, and that the Board ultimately holds him responsible for the information provided. Board Member Hall asked what type of information he would have to correct. The Superintendent indicated that the reports were a reflection of him and he should review, and that Mr. Sullivan was like any other employee that works for him. Board Member Wright feels that since the lobbyist is paid from Board funds, he reports to both and should be able to send reports to everyone at the same time. She does not understand the need for editing, as the reports should reflect what is happening in real time in Tallahassee. Ms. Wright and Ms. Couch shared that the lobbyist last year indicated he was told not to send any information to the Board directly or talk to them. Vice-Chairman Couch said her concern last year was the lag time in receiving information. In years past the lobbyist had sent his report to all at the same time, but there was a bottleneck last year. The Superintendent acknowledged there was a lag time last year. He shared that the lobbyist last year was submitting information late and it was sometimes not accurate. Dr. Vitti said it was a misunderstanding and that the Board was able to call the lobbyist any time they had a question. Chairman Lee agreed with the Superintendent that Mr. Sullivan reported to him and has no problem with the reports going to the Superintendent first. Board Member Grymes felt that the lag time was caused by the lobbyist last year. The Superintendent stated that he wanted to make it clear that Board members had full access to Mr. Sullivan, and did not have to go through him. He indicated that he would make sure there was no bottleneck on forwarding the reports to the Board this year. Vice-Chairman Couch asked about his contract. Ms. Karen Chastain, Chief of Legal Services, stated that the contract was with the District and the contract administrator was the Chief of Staff. After discussion, the Chairman asked for a consensus. He was satisfied receiving the report from the Superintendent; Vice-Chairman Couch and Board Members Juarez, Hall, and Grymes said from the Superintendent, as long as it was timely; Board Member Wright would like for all to receive at the same time. The Chairman asked that the Superintendent, along with Mr. Sullivan,

come back to the Board in the next 48 hours with a method of sharing information.

Speakers:

Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee, Board Chairman
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent
Mr. John Sullivan, Lobbyist
Dr. Constance S. Hall, Board Member
Ms. Becki Couch, Board Vice-Chairman
Ms. Paula D. Wright, Board Member
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Board Member
Ms. Cheryl Grymes, Board Member

[4. NOVEMBER 5, 2013, DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW](#)

Minutes:

The Superintendent reviewed the November 5, 2013, Draft Agenda with the Board. Discussion included the following:

- Academic Item 1 - OnCourse - Timeline for completion is 2014-2015. This contract is for 6 months. May renew if better option not available. Vice-Chairman Couch said as a parent and teacher, this was a most effective program. It was implemented in waves. Staff will also seek community input. Board members asked about funding and continuing to use this program until any new software could be fully implemented. The Superintendent is also seeking private funding to help with the switch. He is looking to create a dynamic portal system and one that would be a national model. He will bring his findings to the December workshop. Vice-Chairman Couch asked that staff follow Policy 8.51 relating to the ACE program for gathering community input.
- Academic Item 2- Microsoft - Did not have to bid out as IT is exempt from that process. Board Member Juarez asked about compatibility with the OS system. Board Member Wright asked if we were leading to a Microsoft product to replace OnCourse. Board Member Hall asked that instead of having to pull information from staff, that we should be provided with information up front, and not wait for them to ask questions. She asked that items be presented in a clear concise manner and not try and sneak stuff in on them. Board Member Wright agreed it would be more helpful to have all of the information up front and to be told why we were working toward a goal.
- Academic Item 4 - Telephones - Board Member Juarez asked for information on the last time we analyzed our telephone system.
- Academic Item 5 - Student Progression Plan - The Superintendent shared that most of the questions he had received were on foreign language. We are not cutting back on the program. The recommendation is to not require a foreign language for a standard diploma. Vice-Chairman Couch shared that if you do not have 2 years of a foreign language in high school, you would need to take it in

college. After discussion, it was agreed to add language to say it was a requirement unless the parent opts their child out. This is for a standard diploma only.

- Academic 6 - SAC - Vice-Chairman Couch told the Superintendent he could respond by e-mail to the questions she had sent in on this item. She asked that the Superintendent share the dates and times of the mid-year reviews with the Board. Board Member Wright expressed concern that the staff member in charge of this was also serving as an AP for the Bridge. The Superintendent said that she did have staff handling this and that he would make sure something was put in writing about monitoring and training of SACs.
- School Choice Items 7-12 - Charter Schools - None have locations at this point. Board Member Juarez asked about the single gender Charter. It was her understanding that our Magnet Grant was turned down because of a single gender school proposal and if would be a problem to have a single gender charter. The Superintendent is checking with the USDOE on this now.
- HRS Item 13 - Transactions - Board Member Wright asked that the Superintendent share which program some of the positions connected to.
- HRS Item 14 - CAST - The Superintendent said they had a signature from DTU on this today. Vice-Chairman Couch asked why we had not discussed this year as in the past.
- Operations Item 22 - Policy Change - Will allow neighborhood watch groups to use schools for their meetings. Vice-Chairman Couch mentioned a dance company that had been denied because they were for profit. The Superintendent will revisit the policy for those groups who are for profit, but education related, and report back to the Board.
- Operations Item 26 - Retrofits - Board Member Wright asked about minority participation and what we were doing to improve.

Speakers:

Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee, Board Chairman
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent
Dr. Constance S. Hall, Board Member
Ms. Becki Couch, Board Vice-Chairman
Ms. Paula D. Wright, Board Member
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez, Board Member
Ms. Cheryl Grymes, Board Member

Adjournment

ADJOURNMENT

Minutes:

The Chairman adjourned the Board Workshop at 4:00 p.m.

BSC

We Agree on this

Superintendent

Chairman