



# Meeting Minutes Duval County Public Schools

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## **April 16, 2021, Joint Meeting with City Council/Duval County School Board**

Ms. Elizabeth Andersen, Chairman  
Mr. Darryl Willie, Vice-Chairman  
Dr. Kelly Coker  
Ms. Lori Hershey  
Mr. Warren A. Jones  
Ms. Charlotte D. Joyce  
Ms. Cindy Pearson  
Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS JOINT MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL AND THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present. Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent was also present.

### **Call Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

### **Items to be Discussed**

#### **1. ISSUES THAT WILL IMPACT GROWTH, BUDGETING, JOINT USE AGREEMENTS, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND WORK WITHIN THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE**

Council President (CP) Hazouri convened the meeting and Council Member Randy DeFoor gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **Half-Cent Sales Tax for Schools**

Dr. Diana Greene, School Superintendent, explained the half cent sales tax for schools through a PowerPoint presentation (see attached in agenda)

Paul Soares, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, through a PowerPoint presentation demonstrated the reporting dashboard capabilities which will display a variety of data (see attached in agenda).

The joint meeting was recessed at 9:17 a.m. for several minutes while demonstrators calling for

changes to some school names were removed from the Council Chamber by the Sergeant at Arms.

The meeting resumed at 9:22 a.m.

Council Member Ronald B. Salem asked how changes will be made in the plan over the next two decades as population trends, the opening of new private and charter schools, etc. change the size and location of the public school population. Dr. Greene said enrollment studies are normally done once every ten years but will now be done every three years to determine student body shifts. The School Board will make any adjustments or changes to the Master Facility Plan based on that information.

### **School District Strategic Plan**

Chairwoman Elizabeth Andersen, through a PowerPoint presentation, explained the development of the new five-year School District Strategic Plan (see attached in agenda). She also spoke briefly about the four goal areas and the five guiding principles.

In response to a question from Council Member Rory Diamond about what the City can do to help children of military families, Chairwoman Andersen said that the Kids Hope Alliance and the United Way currently partner with the school district for assistance programs. Dr. Greene said there are liaisons in several schools with high military populations who specifically work on those issues, and there are several counselors who work with children of military families on their special needs. Duval County Schools is one of the more connected districts with its military population in Florida.

Council Member Michael Boylan asked how the student achievement goals may be impacted by the sales tax-funded infrastructure. Chairwoman Andersen said the board specifically settled on school grades and student performance as the most important things to measure, and the school capital improvements will help that performance.

Council Member Al Ferraro asked what is being done in the area of trades education (i.e. wood shop, metal shop, home economics).

Dr. Greene responded:

- those courses are still offered
- looking at offering more trades training in several schools through a recently developed partnership agreement
- schools will have external corporate partners to ensure that the trade skills programs are relevant to marketplace needs
- the District is balancing high tech and logistics offerings as recommended by the JAXUSA Partnership with traditional construction trades
- it is hard to find qualified teachers for those courses because they can make more working in the trades than in teaching

- the District is starting a Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA)-related skills training and certification program

Council Member Aaron L. Bowman offered congratulations on the District substantially increasing its graduation rate and asked what else the City could do to be supportive of preventing dropouts and increasing the graduation rate further. Dr. Greene said several charter high schools specifically target dropouts to recruit them back into the classroom to get their diplomas. She also noted that Florida counts graduation rates based on 4-year cohorts, so the many students who graduate in 5 years do not factor in as graduates.

Council Member Matt Carlucci congratulated DCPS on doing a great job and asked what the City needs to be investing in (i.e. via the Kids Hope Alliance) to have the greatest positive impact. Board Member Charlotte Joyce said that she is the board's liaison to the KHA. The District is developing a dashboard of information on where KHA funds are being used and what impact they are having.

CP Hazouri asked about services for homeless students. Dr. Greene said the District has a homelessness coordinator to work with homeless students and keep them connected to the school they were attending if they must move, including transportation, so they do not have to adapt to a new school. CP Hazouri asked about the process and timeline for changing school names.

Chairwoman Andersen reported:

- there is a written process in the board's policies that is being followed, but the process was delayed because of the COVID pandemic
- efforts directed at the sales tax referendum process
- Superintendent and School Advisory Committees (SAC) at each school have had a community engagement process
- votes are being taken in each of the nine schools on whether or not a name change is desired
- School Board will make the ultimate call on names, probably in June, based on recommendations of the Superintendent
- Board's policy provides that schools can no longer be named after persons living or deceased

### **Joint Facilities Planning Committee**

Bill Killingsworth, Director of Planning and Development discussed the regulatory framework that governs the creation and work of the Joint Planning Committee and the Interlocal Agreement between the City and school district.

T.R. Hainline, Chair of the Joint Planning Committee, said the main question is how the school system keeps pace with the explosion of growth throughout the community with sufficient capacity, focusing on new students coming from newly built homes, not repair and maintenance issues. School concurrency exists but does not seem to have worked since it was implemented due to the

many options for how children can get an education. It is not as simple as in the past when all children went to the local neighborhood school and you could predict the increase in the number of students by the number of new homes being built. The Florida Legislature made school concurrency optional several years ago and DCPS said in 2018 that they did not need it since it did not seem to be effective. Only City Council can eliminate the requirement from the Ordinance Code, but it has not done that yet. City and School Board staff are still following the concurrency procedures to no effect. Even if school concurrency is repealed, there still needs to be a system of some kind to review new residential growth and plan for new school capacity. The Joint Planning Committee can help with devising a system but needs direction from the elected policy makers about who and how to proceed. Is communication about growth all that is needed? Is a capacity testing system needed? Is an impact fee system an option? The Joint Planning Committee has passed a resolution asking the City Council and School Board for policy guidance.

Mr. Ferraro recommended that a new plan for dealing with school concurrency issues be adopted before abandoning the current system. He said the Council gets hard questions about land use and development issues and their impact on schools, but the responsibility for schools lies with the School Board that does not have a role in the development process. Parents and the community want factual answers from someone about what to expect. Ms. DeFoor said that the present concurrency mechanism is not just a waste of time, but an actual disincentive to some communities because it forces bussing of children from an area of constrained schools to another school where there is available capacity.

Board Member Warren A. Jones thanked Mr. Hainline for his long service on this committee and his dedication to the task. He said there is opposition to new development in some parts of town because of the impact to schools. The concurrency system produces no revenue for the school system. There needs to be some mechanism to pay for growth in the school system since Jacksonville does not have impact fees. While the City gets new revenue from new growth, the school district must roll back its millage pursuant to state law to keep revenue at the previous year's level.

Mr. Boylan noted that the school system does have a representative who sits in on the Planning Commission to give perspective on school capacity needs. As Chair of the LUZ Committee, he is willing to sit down with CP Hazouri and Council Vice President Samuel Newby to talk about how to proceed with the Joint Planning Committee's need for policy direction. Council Member Brenda Priestly Jackson said DCPS is an extremely diverse school district because the county is so diverse. Concurrency is calculated on a countywide level so does not take regional capacity differences into account. Hopefully, the half-cent sales tax new school construction projects will help address some of the area needs. In response to a question from Council Member Garrett L. Dennis about how much revenue the school concurrency system has generated for the City, Mr. Hainline said it has collected \$0 because there is no way to tell where children will go to school since there are many options and you can't determine impact of new development on any particular school.

CP Hazouri inquired if other counties are facing the same conundrum. Mr. Hainline said they are,

but different counties have different methods of make decisions on where to build schools and how to fund them. Chairwoman Andersen said the School Board is committed to finding a resolution to the problem and is happy to participate in a working group with the City. She noted the Master Facilities Plan is a “right-sizing” plan and includes nearly a dozen school closures to help balance capacity with need, considering the many school options in the marketplace.

CP Hazouri noted that there are only two public high schools (First Coast and Atlantic Coast) that do not have swimming pools for use by the public. He thinks they should have them, and the City could help fund them. Mr. Salem asked if it might be possible to recruit charter schools to areas where there is development in areas that do not have DCPS school capacity. CP Hazouri said that is a hard question and there is insufficient time to talk about it today given the impending meeting adjournment deadline.

#### **Jacksonville/Duval Apprenticeship and Training Collaboration**

Ms. Priestly Jackson said a collaborative group representing the school system, the City, the City Council, the Fire and Rescue Department, the Sheriff’s Office, and labor unions has submitted a grant application to Congressman Al Lawson for federal funding for programs and facilities at three high schools. The initial request is for \$2 million.

CP Hazouri thanked everyone for their participation, which was echoed by Chairwoman Andersen. She noted that the last page of the district’s handout includes information on the process the School Board is using to look at relocating out of its riverfront headquarters building.

### **Adjournment**

#### **1. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

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Superintendent

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Chairman