

October 19, 2021, Board Workshop

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 MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present. Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent, and Ms. Rita Mairs, Office of General Counsel, were also present.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m.

Items to be Discussed

1. SCHOOL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Dr. Greene presented Duval County School Police budget and staff updates.

A Budget and Staffing Update PowerPoint presentation (see attached) was presented by Mr. Paul Soares, Assistant Superintendent of Chief Operations, and Lieutenant Shawn Macmaster of the Duval County Public School Police Department.

The presentation covered the following topics:

- Compliance Concerns
- Duval County Public School's current staffing options that includes School Police
- Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO), School Guardian (School Safety Assistants) and Licensed Security Guards, which are not currently being used at this time.
- Qualifications and Training for the Guardian and Security Guards
- Staffing Analysis
- Staffing and Attrition
- Cost Analysis

- Why should Security Guards be used as guardians
- Security Companies with Florida State Term Contracts

During the presentation, Mr. Soares shared information on the School Safety Assistants (SSA's) and School Safety Officers (SSO's). He informed the Board that security guards were not being used. He continued with giving insight into the guardians and security guards and what the required qualifications and certifications are for these positions. Mr. Soares shared with the Board that there are 52 school safety officers, 30 guardians (school safety assistants) and 45 JSO's. The district used to have 60 JSO's. However, due to the Sheriff's Office scaling back, the district only has 40 officers. Mr. Soares shared with the Board that the district faced 22 vacancies and not to include the callouts that would have to be covered as well as the vacancies. The district faces this challenge as it relates to providing security. However, job fairs and recruiting have been implemented to recruit office staff and attrition. Mr. Soares shared the hourly rate from previous years of using JSO. The cost analysis rate increased by 50% and the new rate for JSO is now \$55.00/hour. The hourly rate that Duval County Public Schools used to pay was lower, but was a result of the subsidized rate that the district was receiving.

Mr. Soares concluded the presentation by informing the Board of the recommendation which was to complete the contract with the security company to provide supplemental support for The Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program, continue recruitment of School Safety Officers (SSO's) and School Safety Assistants (SSA's) as well as to continue negotiations with Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) to ensure that the district maintains coverage of the schools in compliance with statutory law.

Board Member Questions/Comments

Board Member Pearson thanked Mr. Soares for doing the research and trying to find an economical way to handle the security issue. She shared insight about a conversation she had which revealed that the low rate of pay makes it difficult to keep people in the positions. She inquired if Mr. Soares researched any other school districts to see if they are happy with the quality of those placed in their schools and what is the longevity of those people in the schools.

Lieutenant Shawn Macmaster of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office joined the discussion to provide feedback concerning St. John's County and their success with the use of Security Guards. Board Member Pearson requested a list of St. John's County Security Guards that have been trained but phased out. Dr. Greene joined the discussion, sharing with Board members that Chief Burton of the Duval County School Police is ready to implement this if the policy is changed.

Vice-Chairman Willie inquired about the ability of the security guards to arrest and the contractual pieces. Dr. Greene confirmed security guards and security assistants have the authority to arrest.

Board Member Hershey inquired about the policy in regards to the use of security guards in schools and the scope of their work.

Board Member Jones commented about the cost of security guards versus safety assistants, which is an \$18,000.00 difference, but includes the cost of equipment. He suggested increasing the safety assistants' salary versus paying a private agency may be a better solution to the security

issue. Dr. Greene explained it may not correct the high failure rate for keeping people in positions as most have issues with passing the firearms part.

Vice-Chairman Willie inquired about the cost of getting candidates to the shooting range. Dr. Greene shared JSO receives a grant from the state to take care of the cost of those sent to the gun range.

Board member Hershey inquired if the District supplies ammunition for practice time at the gun range for those that the District employs. Lieutenant Macmaster stated if extra practice is needed, the district could face a slight increase in the cost of ammunition.

Chair Andersen shared her concerns about hiring outside security guards that may not be able to build relationships with the schools. She understands the need for the district to be compliant but she is concerned about the arming, arrest, and shooting as it relates to the security officers. She questioned when the Board would know if there is an opportunity to recruit differently. Dr. Greene shared that the officers and/or assistants are operated by unions. School Safety Assistants have a priority to keep the facility and everyone inside safe. The district encourages JSO and School Security Officers (SSO) to have relationships at schools, but for security assistants, the building of relationships is not encouraged because of class differences.

Chair Andersen shared that she would much rather invest in SSO. She inquired about the system of training for the SSO's. Mr. Soares shared that the state enforces the contracts. Board Member Joyce inquired if the District was losing some of its officers to other districts because of higher pay. Dr. Greene stated that officers have been lost due to other districts paying more, but predominately because of the overtime because of after-school activities.

Board Member Joyce inquired about the on-going issue of meeting the security requirements, but what does the law actually state concerning school security? Dr. Greene shared with the Board that according to the law, individuals that work in the school can qualify to work as security but they would go through the same steps as the current SSA's are going through today.

Board Member Jones shared insight from previous discussions about the need for teachers to focus on teaching versus on being security. Board Member Joyce appreciated Board Member Jones sharing the insight and believes the Board should incorporate criteria.

Chair Andersen inquired if Dr. Greene was asking the Board for changes in future policy, and a potential contract for one of the state-approved individuals as it relates to security. Dr. Greene agreed. Board Member Hershey shared a conversation about state-statute requirements. Vice-Chairman inquired if there would be penalties for not having coverage on school campuses. Dr. Greene informed the Board that there are penalties for not having coverage on school campuses. Chair Andersen stated when making a policy adjustment it must be noticed for 28 days, so there is another opportunity for the Board to discuss. Board Member Joyce inquired about what is being done since there are so many vacancies. Dr. Greene stated JSO is being used to cover those vacancies and there is a system that tracks the coverage. Board Member Hershey inquired if this is the same state requirement that holds the Chair and the Superintendent responsible. Dr. Greene stated she thought it was only the Superintendent.

Dr. Greene shared with the Board information that is requested during pop-up visits. Dr. Greene stated the district has had no issues with pop-up visits. The discussion ended with Chair Andersen expressing appreciation to Mr. Soares and Lieutenant Macmaster for keeping everyone safe and answering all of the questions during the presentation.

2. BOARD OFFICE STAFF

Ms. Victoria Schultz, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, passed out information sharing with the Board the candidates considered for interviews. She shared with the Board that if they chose to do 3 or more there would be 5 interviews and she advised the Board that it could be done.

Chair Andersen asked the Board Members to please review the information and decide on how many people would be interviewed. Board Member Hershey suggested going with 5 people instead of 4 due to the high turnover rate of some candidates. All Board members agreed to interview 5 people each. Chair Andersen questioned if the interviews needed to be more than one day. Ms. Schultz stated she would work with Board Office Staff to get availability and November 9, 2021 could be the potential date to review scores and then make an offer to the candidate on November 10, 2021 and the tentative start date would be November 17, 2021. Chair Andersen suggested ensuring that the candidates understand the duties and responsibilities of the Board Office Staff position. Board Member Pearson asked about October 25-28 being tentative dates? Chair Andersen asked for the results to be shared electronically. Board members agreed to share availability and proceed from there. Chair Andersen suggested if there are any questions about the duties and responsibilities of the position please see Ms. Schultz or Board Office Staff.

Ms. Mairs shared with the Board that she had just received notification via text that a public hearing for Policy 5.64 was noticed at 1:00 p.m. and she shared she was not aware of the meeting and advised the Board to reopen and revote on Policy 5.64. Chair Andersen asked for clarity. Ms. Mairs stated she never saw anything about this meeting. Chair Andersen asked counsel for clarity on what needed to be done. Ms. Mairs advised the Board on steps to be taken as she was concerned about the public that attended the meeting witnessed action taken place on Policy 5.64 but were no longer present. She informed the Board that any new policy needs to have a public hearing notice no matter how many people attend. She advised the Board to file a notice of change for the daily record then schedule a special meeting within 48 hours to handle this issue. Chair Andersen informed the Board that they needed to decide on a time to meet so that they could revote.

Board Member Pearson inquired about the mask mandate. Chair Andersen advised the Board that she does not want to have a conversation about issues that should be discussed in a public hearing without the public being present. Board Member Pearson withdrew her question.

Vice-Chairman Willie inquired about the Board Office Staff interviews and he suggested that if another meeting is needed then they could have a special meeting and then afterwards have interviews for Board Office Staff. Chair Andersen asked all Board Members to please submit their availability as soon as possible.

Adjournment

1. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 p.m.

MA

Superintendent

Chairman