

November 8, 2021, Board Member Meeting

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 except Chair Andersen, Board Member Lori Hershey, Board Member Charlotte Joyce, and Board Member Cindy Pearson. Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent, and Ms. Rita Mairs, Office of General Counsel, were not present.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m.

Items to be Discussed

1. CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT HENRY KITE, RUTLEDGE PEARSON, AND ARLINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Board Member Jones briefed everyone on the reason for the meeting which was two of Duval County's Elementary Schools will be impacted by the new IDEA Charter School.

The discussion included Board Member Jones sharing information about the closing of Henry F. Kite Elementary that will take place the year after IDEA Charter School opens. Board Member Jones shared the charter school has already started recruiting students by passing out flyers in the neighborhood. He also shared the impact that this is having on Rutledge H. Pearson Elementary. He inquired about how to handle this to ensure the district does not lose the current students we have. He suggested utilizing students in need of community service hours to pass out flyers to assist with public awareness.

Vice-Chairman Willie inquired about the school choice and the options that give our students and families to attend the school of their choice. He shared that, essentially, that is the same thing that

charter schools are doing. Board Member Jones states that there are a lot of misconceptions with the public as some assume that when a public school is closed and a charter school is opened near it, the public assumes the district is working hand in hand with the charter school. Board Member Dr. Coker, states that she can see how the public can have that perception. Discussion took place as to what can be done to avoid losing our students and families to charter schools. Board Member Jones suggested that the district use targeted campaigns to assist with school closings and the opening of new charter schools.

Board Member Dr. Coker talked about the new population study and how it will probably suggest potential changes in Arlington. Ms. Sharwonda Peek, Assistant Superintendent of School Choice, shared with everyone that the charter schools are advertising enrolling now but the public schools are not advertising enrollment. She suggested that the district utilizes basic advertisements such as putting signs up to ensure that the public is aware of what is happening to avoid losing our students and families.

Mr. Randy Gallup, Director of Operations, Bus Plan and Program Management, shared with everyone information about the partnership that Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) has with the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP).

Mr. Paul Soares, Assistant Superintendent, Chief of Operations, shared information on boundary changes and repurposing from the ACE meetings. Board Member Jones requested to have flyers printed so they could be given to the schools in those targeted areas that are being affected by public school closings. Dr. Pierce shared information about how the district is currently advertising but is interested in how to reach students and families without wasting money. Board Member Dr. Coker suggested that we show those students and families that are a part of the district more love. They discussed customer service and how it plays a big role in advertising. Ms. Peek shared that we do not have a waiting list for schools as we had in the past. Ms. Kimberly Miller, Director, Chief of Staff, shared that she does not think principals are aware of the total impact. Board Member Jones shared the impact of losing students which includes the employment of teachers being impacted. Vice-Chairman Willie shared that teachers need to also think about ways to recruit students and families as teachers also play a big role in the recruitment process. Board Member Dr. Coker shared the experience of a past principal that is now at a Charter School. Ms. Peek states that she feels IDEA is recruiting the entire family and she feels Duval County Public Schools needs to use the same method.

Mr. Soares spoke of the transportation issues and the trust that parents have in the yellow bus and how some parents do not trust other transportation methods.

Board member Jones asked for a markup of the schools being affected by the closing. Vice-Chairman Willie requested an electronic copy of the information as he thinks that the Board could do a better job with advertising.

Board Member Jones stated even grandparents are advertising for the Charter Schools and it is because of a lack of understanding as they do not realize it is not a public school. Vice-Chairman Willie says that some people do not have a clue about the difference between public and charter schools. He also shared the paperwork may be too much for some as well. Board Member Coker

shared how there is some hesitancy about getting rid of the blue cards, but the technology department is ready to roll out new programs to assist with the enrollment process to make it easier. Ms. Peek said this would really help families.

Dr. Tracy Pierce, Chief Officer, Communications, talked about the retention rate. Board Member Dr. Coker spoke of certain principals that made a difference when it came to the retention rates. Board Member Dr. Coker talked about the dashboard and the information about student attendance. She continued discussing the boundary changes, then Mr. Gallup joined the discussion and shared information on how some did not know of some schools that have magnet status and the ones that are neighborhood schools.

Ms. Peek shared information and the enhancements that are being made in OneView which would be helpful in assisting families with the school locator so they can determine their neighborhood school. Board Member Dr. Coker added that maybe OneView can be utilized to send out something for advertising purposes. Ms. Peek suggested maybe a transition mailer would be helpful. Mr. Gallup added to the discussion, by sharing issues that are faced with Focus.

Vice-Chairman Willie suggested maybe having those with high regards in our city and our Superintendent to advertise or release an approval rating for the public schools would be helpful. Thinking about all of our schools and the visibility of them, Vice-Chairman Willie suggested looking at the master facility plan as it relates to the visibility of Charter Schools. He suggests that public schools need to be more visible. Board Member Dr. Coker suggested that when closing schools, the district should look at those that are not as visible. Dr. Pierce spoke of charter schools and how they put the big beautiful playground in the front of the schools so that students and families can see if from the road, therefore luring those families to their schools.

Mr. Soares says the district needs to shift to a competitive stance because everything matters. Mr. Soares says the principals are the ones that can save the schools and they also discussed how far some schools are off the road.

2. RECOMMENDED PROTOCOLS TO FOLLOW PRIOR TO THE SALE OR DEMOLITION OF A SCHOOL SITE

Board Member Jones discussed when closing schools there should be a process in place to avoid issues that were dealt with when Lake Forest Elementary was closed. He feels that all registered voters should get communication from the district to communicate about the closure of schools and then request suggestions on how to repurpose the buildings. Meetings should be held to inform the public about why the school is closing and hear from community members as to what they would like to see.

Mr. Soares shared the district will close a school for a number of reasons such as consolidation, condition of the building, etc. but there should be a decision from the district to decide what will happen. He explained the process involved.

Board Member Dr. Coker inquired if this was something that needed to be included in board policy

to ensure board policy reflects the process of what should be done when closing schools. Vice-Chairman Willie states, no matter what, there is always going to be someone that opposes. However, he suggested that policy be reviewed to ensure that the same steps are followed for every district, every time when dealing with closing a school. He states it is important that people understand where they could be involved and where they could go if they wanted to buy the building. Board Member Jones says the support of the community needs to be built and communication with community members at the beginning of the closing of a school along with getting suggestions on what they would like to see take its place would be very helpful.

Mr. Gallup shared vacant buildings are a liability and safety issue.

Vice-Chairman Willie shares concerns about the district being viewed negatively because of businesses that are placed in the community that the community does not approve of.

Discussion continued among everyone about the various meetings that took place, and the things that are reviewed when it comes to the sale or demolition of a school site.

Board Member Jones thanked everyone for their participation.

Adjournment

1. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

MA

Superintendent

Chairman