

April 11, 2023, Board Workshop

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

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present. Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent, and Mr. Ray Poole, Office of General Counsel, were also present.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m.

Items to be Discussed

1. TRANSPORTATION UPDATE - MAGNET STOPS

Board Member Joyce arrived at 9:06 a.m.

Paul Soares, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Operations, shared a PowerPoint presentation (see attached).

Discussion included the following:

- HB377 Middle and High School start times would have a dramatic impact on the district because everyone lives in a high school boundary and all choice riders would have to follow high school routes.
- Some county-wide magnet networks are paired to drive the cost down.
- The number of riders is what determines the cost of the bus.
- Ways to reduce transportation costs.
- Board Policy 8.30, Student Transportation.
- State requirements.
- Ensuring that students are aware that Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) is available to them.
- Students can take advantage of existing JTA routes, as JTA cannot make changes to their routes.
- JTA buses do not have crossing arms and all of the safety equipment that regular school buses have.
- The reason why Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) transportation is so expensive is because

DCPS has one of the newest and safest fleets in the state.

- There are about 1100 students per day that ride JTA buses.
- The program that was offered by JTA was to service middle and high school students.
- There is no contract or MOU that the district has with JTA, it is at the discretion of JTA.
- Mileage and fuel are what the district pays for and the reduction is based upon mileage.
- Geography is what was used to determine the transportation zones.
- A suggestion was made to pair routes to be more efficient.
- Bell times must follow transportation times.
- A request was made by Board Member Hershey to Dr. Greene to get the total of how many students are riding buses to attend a magnet school broken down by district to find out if students are leaving District 7 for advanced placement.
- Potential cost savings from top magnet draws by providing academies in each district.
- Take a hard look at what the district is offering and replicate what is being done well and implement that in each of the 7 districts.
- High schools have an accelerated program.
- \$7 million increase in transportation costs.
- Salaries are the biggest expense of the district.
- Utility costs have increased as well.
- Addressing programs.
- Students leaving high schools in District 6 to go to a charter or private school.
- Recapture students by making Lakeshore Middle School a dedicated magnet school.
- Making Westside High more centralized.
- Take a look at some of the larger districts to see how they circumvented some of these situations.
- In Recommendation 6 (see attached), Ed White and Riverside High Schools were grouped together because of mileage.
- A ridership count will be provided by the Transportation department to show the number of riders coming from various places to magnet schools.
- Vice-Chairman Pearson referenced the report that Dr. Greene sends out at the beginning of the year concerning student enrollment per district.
- Vice-Chairman made a request to get a report of how many students are in a choice program that's not their neighborhood school per board district.
- Choosing programs outside of the district and making those programs localized.
- Some schools are losing a lot of students to another program.
- Look at our customers' confidence and find out why neighborhood schools are not being chosen. Some of it has to do with confidence, which deals with school culture, safety, behavior and learning environment.
- Parents may choose a school for safety reasons even if the child does not have the academics to support it.
- School culture and the perception of safety.
- The effects of the desegregation court order on transportation.
- Request to do a district wide survey to find out what parents are looking for.
- A way to do an internal microschool.
- Use of data to see what each district wants.
- Bring back the love of having a neighborhood school.
- Ability to increase overall enrollment.
- The passing of HB1 would allow parents to afford transportation cost.
- Enrollment stays stationary but the option to pay for buses was not available.
- Funds that parents can access.

- Magnet transportation disproportionately affected low income students.
- Transportation for students that live in Mandarin area.
- Concerns for students with the same Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan as students at GRASP Academy are getting cut due to transportation.
- Inquiry concerning whether the district looked at or satisfied the court order and how we continue ensuring it is equitable for all students.
- 4 of the 5 recommendations would impact the diversity of the schools. Due to that, what requirements still exist because the magnet program was to establish diversity in schools.
- Does the court order apply to charter schools?
- The contract for Student Transportation of America was extended, and because they defaulted on the contract, it caused the cost of transportation to increase.
- The recommendations do not take into consideration the school start times.
- Looking at the city in quadrants or regions.
- How do we connect transportation back to academic outcomes?
- Future financial outcomes depend on how much the district chooses.
- Not all dedicated elementary magnet schools get district-wide service.
- Westside and Ed White High School have 3 routes each with 50 students on each bus, so there is a need to maximize cost savings.
- Asking the companies to provide bus services and van services in the rebidding process.
- Many schools are subcontracting. Z-Trip and van services are being used due to driver shortages.
- Contracts have been amended to allow non-school buses per state standards.
- Smaller transportation methods.
- Discussion concerning DCPS having their own fleet.
- STA Grant.
- Electric buses are operating now but they have a limited range. It takes 8 hours to charge an electric bus.

Chairman Dr. Coker thanked Mr. Soares for his service.

2. SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATE

The meeting recessed at 10:36 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 10:46 a.m.

Chief Burton, Executive Director, School Police and Mr. Soares presented a PowerPoint Presentation to the Board (see attached).

Discussion included the following:

- Everyone collectively working together is what keeps our schools safe.
- Creating a learning environment so students do not have to worry about safety.
- Bill 30.15 allows the guardian program to be extended to private schools.
- Bill 1001.212 has created a unified search tool allowing other information to be put out about other counties.
- Bill 1002.33 allows school police to make arrests in charter schools.
- Bill 1003.25 states within 3 days student records must be transferred.
- Constant training within the district.
- Training is accessed through the "School Safety" SharePoint site.
- Preferred training at the beginning of the year to ensure the training is fresh on everyone's mind.

- Concerns with school safety drills as they create a lot of anxiety for younger students.
- Every threat is evaluated to the fullest.
- The Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool must be completed annually for every school.
- 82% of people that deal directly with children have had mental health training.
- Board Member Hershey thanked Chief Burton for the training and his leadership and shared that she was happy to hear that there would be some adjustments in the frequency of the training.
- Incidents are reported on students to School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR). However, if an incident is considered a threat or harm to students or staff, it is also reported.
- All of the schools are totally staffed through the guardian program.
- Concerns about substitute teachers' training and them knowing what to do during a lockdown.
- Kings Trail Elementary provides a very thorough notebook on what substitutes should do if there is a lockdown.
- The Board should have a conversation about how it is perceived for teachers having guns in a class.
- Keeping children as safe as possible.
- Armoured One training is supplemental and is a one-time training, but it is not as comprehensive as the district's training.
- The Armoured One training is not mandatory but they are encouraged to take it.
- Any mention of the National Rifle Association (NRA) was removed from the training to ensure it was not political.
- The district did not participate financially at all with Armoured One.
- The City of Jacksonville participated financially with Armoured One.
- Board Member Willie thanked Chief Burton for the presentation.
- An analysis of the breakdown of the credible threats will be done towards the end of the school year and will be supplied to the Board.
- Vacancies of School Safety Officers (SSO) and School Safety Assistants (SSA).
- Every school is covered and the district has flex officers when someone is absent.
- Duval County School Police (DCSP) has a very robust recruiting unit and the district is doing well.
- Allied Officers cost the district \$56,000/year and for Jacksonville Sheriff's Officers (JSO) it cost the district \$75,000/year and DCPS officers, including their benefits, cost \$53,000/year.
- Allied Officers do not work during the summer.
- Chairman Dr. Coker thanked Dr. Greene and Chief Burton for the Armoured One Contract.
- The new sign on bonus for police officers applies to school officers as well.
- Law Enforcement can look at a student's social media account if there is a trigger or threat, but district employees cannot.
- If there are red flags found on social media as it relates to the behavioral threat assessment, the school police works with the Communications Department to get information out to the public to share that a threat was made.
- The School Police works very well with the Intelligence Unit.
- Once a threat has been made, the one who has jurisdiction, depends on the extensiveness of the crime or code of conduct violation and what the investigation reveals.

Mr. Soares presented information on the facilities aspect of safety and security (see attached).

- Safety and security needs to be provided for all schools.
- For those schools in the GAP project, the amount of investment was limited.
- There was a delay with the Badge Passes.
- Rutledge Pearson's windows were raised to decrease the line of sight and it has an impact film on them to provide safety.

Chief Burton joined the presentation, sharing information on the DCSP K-9 Unit.

- Previously, the district would have to rely on the JSO K-9 Unit if needed.
- The purpose of the K-9 Unit is to decrease violence in schools.
- The district received the dogs at no charge to the district.
- The St. Johns and Clay counties are training the dogs at no cost to the district.
- The dogs will work every day in the schools looking for guns and drugs to ensure the safety of our students.
- The yearly cost of the K-9 Unit will be \$19,895 but, letters have already been written to get companies to sponsor the K-9's.
- The rotation of the dogs throughout the schools have not been worked out yet, so a request was made by Board Member Carney to have this information brought back to the Board.
- The K-9's will start their official 4-6 week training in May and they will be available and ready for the first day of school.
- The district will still need assistance from the JSO K-9 Unit until the DCSP K-9 Unit increases.
- There is a very specific protocol for students to know how to interact with the K-9's.

Chief Burton concluded by informing everyone that the district is doing everything they can to keep the students safe.

The meeting recessed at 12:10 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 12:16 pm.

3. SOFT SKILLS UPDATE

Corey Wright, Assistant Superintendent, Accountability & Assessment, and Jill Fierle, Director, Career & Technical Education (CTE) presented a PowerPoint Presentation entitled "Improving Post-Secondary Readiness" (see attached).

Discussion included the following:

- Duval Ready prepares students for life after graduation.
- Duval Ready medallions have been ordered and will be received in time for graduation.
- This will be the first year that students will receive the Duval Ready Medallions during graduation, so something will be said during the ceremony to acknowledge the students who are receiving the medallions. The district will work with the schools on this.
- The blended learning components can be done over the summer.
- Each school has a Duval Ready Designee.
- A list of experiences was approved in the beginning that determined the capstones, but if a student/teacher has an idea of one to be approved that is not on the list, a form can be filled out to have it reviewed for approval by the CTE office.
- Board Member Hershey applauded Dr. Greene and district staff for their work and efforts.
- Board Member Joyce shared with Mr. Wright and Ms. Fierle that they had exceeded her expectations.
- Chairman Dr. Coker applauded Mr. Wright and Ms. Fierle for the work they did and shared with them, the work was impressive.
- Board Member Willie shared he can't wait to attend graduation to see how many students will graduate Duval Ready.
- Students still have time to get Duval Ready as long as they are not struggling in other subjects.
- Duval Ready graduation is something that should be strived for.
- The focus is on employers that are career driven.
- Dr. Greene commended Mr. Wright, his team and his supervisor for their work.

- Board Member Carney thanked them for their efforts.
- A flyer with a QR code was created to send to businesses.
- Duval Ready graduates will get a seal on their diploma and it will be shown on their transcript as well for employers.
- Common language to prepare students on how to describe Duval Ready on a resume

4. GOVERNANCE

Chairman Dr. Coker:

- Shared graduation rates information from Mr. Wright's office with the Board Members.
- She encouraged them to look at the data rates.
- She encouraged anyone speaking particularly with law makers to share the information on the one pager.
- She thanked Mr. Wright for updating the information on the one pager.

Sonita Thompson, Chief of Staff:

- The district is thrilled that the Sales Surtax Committee has done such an outstanding job providing updates to the Board and to the community.
- The expiration of the first term is approaching and some members may or may not wish to continue for the 2nd term or board members may want to choose someone else.
- Mr. Rogers sent some information out and the information was provided to each board member.
- The last meeting on May 17, 2023, will be to celebrate the work of the oversight committee and to celebrate the former members and to transition the new members in so they can observe the work that has been done.
- Mrs. Thompson requested that the Sales Surtax Oversight Committee Member Nominations form be returned to the Board Office Staff as soon as possible.

Chairman Dr. Coker:

- The superintendent's evaluation is behind because the evaluation committee does not know at the moment what is being done by the state with the test scores. However, the information that has been received will allow the interim evaluation to be started, so a meeting will be scheduled for that.
- The Audit Advisory Committee requested a joint meeting with the Board Members to discuss how they can communicate with them and engage to ensure the work that they are doing is what is needed by the Board. The tentative date for this meeting is May 18, 2023, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Ray Poole, Office of General Counsel (OGC):

- Reminded the Board of the request that Board Member Hershey made for an internal investigation into the events that transpired at Douglas Anderson.
- OGC has received notification of two lawsuits so far.
- Shared insight into the conversation between Dr. Greene, Aaron Jackson, Attorney, Johnson Jackson, Professional Limited Liability Company (PLLC) and himself.
- OGC desires that the person that handles the investigation be contracted by OGC.

Board Member Joyce:

- Requested opportunities to have 3-5 attorneys that handle this type of claim for OGC to vet.
- The investigation covers several people.
- Mr. Poole shared he would talk to Jason Teal, General Counsel, and informed the Board that when there is outsourced legal sources it must be approved by General Counsel and Mr. Teal must give his stamp of approval.

Board Member Willie:

- The documents that have been received and statements that have been made are reviewed by Mr. Poole and then given to OGC.
- Mr. Poole shared the investigator has not been decided as of yet.
- Chairman Dr. Coker shared that the documents were shared with Victoria Schultz, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources.
- Mrs. Schultz shared the documents with Chief Burton.

Board Member Hershey:

- Inquired about the timeframe in which the Board would receive updates or feedback.
- Mr. Poole shared that the Board would be privy to this information.

Board Member Joyce:

- There is a need for the Board to understand what they are engaging the firm to do.
- The scope of what the Board is asking the firm to do should be very clear.
- The need to ensure that transparency is provided for the public, to ensure that nothing is being covered up.
- Having a thorough vetting done by OGC.
- Chairman Dr. Coker agreed with the need for transparency.

Vice- Chairman Pearson:

- Four streams of investigation that includes Professional Standards with at least 3 or more employees at Douglas Anderson, Law Enforcement for one and two lawsuits and then the potential external investigation and how they all fit together and what the Board should expect.
- Mr. Poole shared with the Board that the emphasis on Professional Standards would be on someone doing something bad. From the criminal perspective, it would be on if a crime has been committed. From this type of inquiry, the emphasis would be on what is going on at Douglas Anderson and what the environment is like, but the decision would be left to the Board.

Board Member Carney:

- There is a need to find out the culture of Douglas Anderson as well as district-wide.
- Collectively, the Board needs to agree that everything is checked into and, when engaging outside counsel, make sure systemically we are covering everything, and procedures are in place as to how to handle certain situations.
- The need to know how decisions are being made in regards to disciplinary actions and making sure the district does not get in this situation again.

Chairman Dr. Coker:

- Inquired of Mr. Poole what he would recommend the Board to do.
- Mr. Poole shared with the Board that he would reach out to OGC to share each board members' concerns.
- Board Member Joyce inquired if the Board should hire an investigator or should an audit be performed. As a Board, she says they should define what they are looking for.

Board Member Hershey:

- Shared her reasoning for requesting the investigation was to find out if there were any mess-ups by the district.
- Are the right systems, policies and procedures in place.

- Further action that the Board may need to take.
- Board Member Joyce shared with the Board that they needed to focus on Douglas Anderson.

Board Member Willie left at 1:24 p.m.

Board Member Jones:

- Ensure systems are in place to protect the students.

Chairman Dr. Coker inquired if the Board could get an update next Tuesday on the issue.

Board Member Carney:

- Shared with the Board that she spent a full day with JSO's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) to talk about online safety with the students.
- Inquired if the Board would welcome the ICAC Unit to come do a presentation at a Board Workshop to talk about what is being done to educate about the dangers of social media, online activity and online predators, as she wants to see the Board engage in the program to impact.
- Chairman Dr. Coker suggested that the next time they do a technology presentation the ICAC Unit could come and do a presentation.

Board Member Hershey:

- Inquired if funds are set aside to repair or replace turf fields. Per Dr. Greene money is set aside for all fields.
- Per Board Member Joyce, some schools may not want turf fields, so she inquired if the schools are given an option, but no schools have told administration that they do not want the turf field.
- Some athletes say they can perform better on grass.

Dr. Greene:

- Shared that the district's goal was to make sure that each district had at least one turf field and she continued sharing that some fields are not in good condition and something has to be done.
- Inquired if the Board received information from her about the buses that caught fire and she provided the Board with an update that transportation would be covered for all students.

Chairman Dr. Coker thanked everyone for their presentations.

Adjournment

1. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

MA

Superintendent

Chairman