



Meeting Minutes Duval County Public Schools

August 3, 2023, Duval County School Board/City Council Joint Meeting

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. Dana Kriznar, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present except Board Members April A. Carney, Warren A. Jones and Charlotte D. Joyce. Dr. Dana Kriznar, Superintendent, and Mr. Ray Poole, Office of General Counsel, were also present.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10.01 a.m.

City Council Members Present:

Councilman Ron Salem, President
Councilman Ken Amaro
Councilman Mike Gay
Councilman Will Lahnen
Councilman Kevin Carrico
Councilman Joe Carlucci
Councilman Michael Boylan
Councilman Jimmy Peluso
Councilman Reggie Gaffney, Jr.
Councilwoman Tyrone Clark-Murray
Councilwoman Ju 'Coby Pittman
Councilman Raul Arias
Councilman Rahman Johnson
Councilman Nick Howland
Councilman Matt Carlucci
Councilman Chris Miller

Council President Salem convened the meeting and Council Member Carrico gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. The attendees introduced themselves for the record. President Salem thanked the School Board members and district staff for attending the joint meeting. He announced his intention that the two bodies would meet four times during his term as President, twice in the fall and twice next spring, with hopes to foster a good working relationship between the two bodies. School Board Chair Dr. Kelly Coker thanked the President for extending the invitation to meet with the Council.

Items to be Discussed

1. TO REVIEW THE CURRENT STATUS OF DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS, AND BUILDING PROGRESS AS A RESULT OF THE REFERENDUM.

Scott Schneider, Chief of Schools, gave an overview of the school district and its top 4 goals:

- 1) improve from the bottom quartile of Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) reading and math performance
- 2) increase high performing schools earning A, B or C grades
- 3) post-secondary readiness improvement
- 4) strengthening Career Technical Engineering (CTE) Program for workforce readiness

Those 4 goals are pursued through 5 guiding principles:

- 1) recruit and retain highly effective educators
- 2) sales tax transparency
- 3) family and community partnership increased opportunities
- 4) monitor and support at-risk students
- 5) culturally responsive educational environment (see attachment)

Discussion included the following:

- 47% compared to the state average of 53%, although 90% of the district's students are graduating on time, which indicates that by the senior year of high school they meet the graduation requirements, including literacy standards.
- Team Up and other after-school academic assistance programs.
- Kids Hope Alliance is a tremendous help in finding resources to fund those programs, but there is always a need for more programs in more schools.
- The impact of the 1% sales tax approved by the voters last year.
- Teachers have begun to see the pay raises that the sales tax provided for and that is having an impact on hiring – they have 200 fewer vacancies this year than last year.
- The impact of the state voucher program on enrollment.
- There has been a steady decline in district school enrollment over the last 10 years but no recent spike in departures.
- Those leaving district schools tend to be higher-socioeconomic families.
- The number of after-school slots has been reduced to 80 per school in many schools that used to have over 100 slots, which was done to spread resources to ensure at least minimal coverage at all schools.
- More funding is needed to meet the demands for after-school services.
- There is a school bus driver shortage across the nation and in Jacksonville. The district has coverage plans for routes that don't have drivers and will post route delay information on the district website when there aren't enough drivers.

Outgoing Assistant Superintendent of Operations Paul Soares and current Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Ericka Harding, presented the district's Master Facilities Plan. 28 new schools will be constructed, mostly representing consolidations of existing schools. The district will be going from 157 down to 141 schools to eliminate old, out-of-date schools and address shifting population patterns (see attachment).

Discussion included the following:

- There is a \$1 billion maintenance needs backlog.
- The district will remove nearly all portable classrooms and reduce total school capacity to eliminate the current 3,000 empty seats. 31 schools are in design, 95 are in construction, 10 are complete, and 100% of projects are on schedule and on budget.
- There is a 16.6% minority/women business participation rate in projects so far.
- Safety and security projects (video cameras, radio communications, fencing, etc.) at 154 schools will be completed by December of this year.
- 11 new schools will be opened in the next 3 academic years. New schools are being built based on several prototype designs to save on design costs.
- The district has a sales tax project dashboard that provides easy access to information about the progress of the projects and also produces a quarterly progress report.
- The district's Sales Surtax Oversight Committee and their role in overseeing project designs and costs. The committee oversees compliance with the referendum requirements and project progress.
- Constituents are clamoring for construction of a high school and middle school in the northeast area of the city.
- The master plan is based on 10-year growth projections; the plan will be adjusted when the annual projections show actual growth is taking place.
- There are no restrictions on where charter schools can locate in proximity to traditional public schools. The charters are not subject to the state's restrictions on not building new schools where vacant seats already exist in other schools.
- The school guardian program and school police are fully staffed for all schools for the upcoming year.
- 20 Jacksonville Sheriff Officer (JSO) officers and 20 contract security officers along with the District Police force are being utilized.
- The district plans to hire more in-house officers and eventually stop using JSO officers for guardian duty. They are down from 103 JSO guardians several years ago to only 20 now.
- The impact on schools of the recent change in state law regarding permit-less concealed carry of firearms. New gun and drug detection technology, including a new canine unit, for middle and high schools have been purchased.

Corey Wright, Assistant Superintendent for Accountability and Assessment, and Jill Fierle, Director for Career and Technical Education, discussed workforce initiatives in the school system. Two top priorities are:

- 1) post-secondary readiness
- 2) career technical education (CTE)

Post-secondary readiness includes so-called "soft skills" for the workforce based on business and stakeholder input – professionalism, communication, problem solving, teamwork, etc. (see attached).

Discussion included the following:

- CTE starts in elementary school and runs through high school to teach career readiness, from basic career exploration and interest identification in younger grades to specific industry certifications, job shadowing and dual enrollment programs in high school.
- There are career academies at every high school that follow on from middle school programs.
- The district will be doing a comprehensive needs assessment with the community and district stakeholders to determine what the local economy needs so that can be reflected in the district's offerings.

- Career pathways are changing as the world changes and are no longer strictly linear.
- Families need to be educated that going to college straight from high school is not necessarily the only or best way to proceed to a career.
- The district has career partnerships with entities such as Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) and VyStar Credit Union, among others.
- CTE is very important for students with learning challenges who have individual educational plans (IEPs) because this shows them tangible paths to success.
- The program needs more publicity so business owners can be aware.
- The School Board has put an emphasis on CTE and workforce development in its facilities plan.

Dr. Dana Kriznar shared several of the district's Points of Pride. The district has 16 career academies that have achieved master-level certification in collaboration with the JAXUSA Partnership. 30 schools are designated by the state as Schools of Excellence and no schools are subject to takeover by the state due to poor performance. 629 students in the Class of 2023 earned the Duval Ready designation. Class of 2023 graduates earned \$1.3 million in college scholarships. Duval County and other Florida high schools perform very well on standardized tests in comparison to schools in other states across the nation.

Discussion included the following:

- African-American history instruction given the recent controversy about state-mandated changes. Duval is one of 9 districts in Florida designated as outstanding in the teaching of African American history and is a mentor district to other districts in the state.
- Curriculum units are based in part on local history and research and are infused throughout every academic field.

Dr. Kelly Coker shared an update on the Superintendent search also praising Dr. Kriznar for her outstanding performance.

Discussion included the following:

- The board has hired a consultant to help with the search for the new superintendent. Next week the board will be discussing mechanisms for receiving citizen input into the process.
- The position will be advertised nationally.
- The board hopes to hire by the end of the year and have a new superintendent in place in January, but that depends on the caliber of the applications received.
- The school district's budget, whether growth in the property tax roll is helping the district's finances, and what flexibility, if any, the district has with regard to its budget. Local school millage is restricted by the state, as well as the amount of the state's allocation to each district. State law requires that the district's millage rate be rolled back as property values grow, so the only alternative for additional revenue is to hold a voter referendum for an additional millage levy above the state cap.
- Hazel Health System and its relationship to the school system. The board just authorized a contract for another year with Hazel Health for their provision of services (telehealth for physical and mental health issues, with parent consent), paid with federal ARP funds.
- The contract provides a convenient mechanism for urgent care services and is not intended to be a primary care provider. A decision will need to be made about continuing the program when the federal funds are no longer available.
- Charter Schools are not required by law to report their use to the district, but a number of them are doing it voluntarily (following the lead of the KIPP schools which offered their usage data first) and the district is putting that information on its sales tax dashboard.
- The district's plans and programs for identifying mental health issues among students and its

policies regarding the health and safety of athletes. The KHA funds full-service school programs which include mental health service access at every school. Grades 4, 6 and 9 have specific screenings for mental health issues. 91% of district employees, as well as many of the district's contractors who have direct contact with students, have taken mental health issue identification training.

- The district follows FHSA guidelines on athletic training and practices, and Duval County is fortunate in having athletic trainers present at every practice through a volunteer-organized effort to ensure athlete safety. In response to another question, Council Member Pittman was informed that all allegations of bullying are reported to the state and must be investigated and the findings reported.
- School Board Member Darryl Willie shared his excitement for the relationship between the School Board and City Council and also suggested that some of the meetings be held in the schools to showcase the facilities available.
- President Salem invited his council colleagues to suggest discussion topics for future meetings.

Adjournment

1. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

MA

Superintendent

Chairman