

January 14, 2025, Board Workshop

Ms. Charlotte D. Joyce, Chairman
Ms. April A. Carney, Vice-Chairman
Ms. Melody A. Bolduc
Mr. Reginald Blount
Ms. Cynthia Pearson
Mr. Anthony Ricardo
Mr. Darryl D. Willie
Dr. Christopher Bernier, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present. Dr. Christopher Bernier, Superintendent, and Mr. Ray Poole, Office of General Counsel, were also present. Vice-Chairman Carney arrived at 9:05 a.m.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

Items to be Discussed

1. MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL START TIMES UPDATE

Michael Ramirez, Chief of Staff, shared a PowerPoint Presentation with the Board on the Implementation of House Bill (HB) 733. Discussion included the following:

- Middle and High School Start Times Update.
- Adjusting school start times.
- Responsibility of HB 733.
- Current thinking and how it will look.
- Community feedback.
- Potential outcomes of changing school start times.
- Impacts of sleep deprivation.
- Benefits of later start times.
- Transportation and later start times.
- No decisions have been made yet.
- Current start times.
- Scenarios with various start and end times.
- Next steps and timeline.
- Advocacy around legislation.
- Buses average 8-10 minutes for each stop.

- Time needed between elementary, middle, high and dedicated magnets to prepare for the next school pick up.
- The shift in cultural ideas is the biggest concern.
- Studies regarding students' need for sleep.
- Preparing parents to lend their voices to the process in Tallahassee.
- The responsibility of the district to produce plans.
- Student electronic communication regarding the school start times.
- Concerns regarding increased absenteeism and tardiness among elementary students because start times do not work with parent work schedules.
- Teacher and public feedback.
- Inquiries regarding employee discounts for extended day.
- Traffic schedules.
- Sufficient number of buses.
- Activity buses.
- Allowing locally elected school boards to have control of operational issues.
- Consideration for high school students that are working and middle schoolers with sporting events.
- HB733 applicable to charter schools but not private schools.
- Concerns regarding the start and end time for high school athletic games and the ability to host them at later times.
- A bring back for the additional expense of what it would cost to accommodate the after-school programs was requested.
- Concerns for students staying up later to complete homework.
- Questions around if the impact that this is projected to have on student academics is worth it.
- A request for a bring back was made to receive how this would work within a K-12 Charter.
- The impact this could cause due to the need for games to be held on the weekend which could result in stress for staff.
- A bring back request was made for a breakdown of what transportation would look like.
- Disproportionally affect certain families more than others.
 - Factors that affect other communities more than others.
- A request to review data was made to see how students that arrive to school early are performing versus students that are not arriving as early.
- Safety concerns for young elementary students at a bus stop or walking to school when it is dark.
- Concerns for too much being placed on high school students.
- A request was made to hear from more students.
- More flexibility.
- Absorbent homework data supports that it doesn't make enough impact on students' academic success.
- Consider teachers that have a 2nd job.
 - Retention rate.
 - Creation of positive culture for teachers.
- Talking points for Tallahassee.
- Appreciation was shared for the work of staff.
- Future communication with legislators regarding HB733.
- Making this in the best interest of children to avoid running into roadblocks.
- Legislative schedule sessions.
- Identifying those on the education committee. A list was requested for the education committee.
- The Board inquired about another workshop to ensure the public can hear the data.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES - PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UPDATE

Victoria Schultz, Chief of Human Resources, shared a PowerPoint Presentation about Professional Standards Investigative Process with the Board. Discussion included the following:

- Appropriate swift rule following.
- Following inquiry process.
- Ensuring everyone understands why the process is being followed.
- Mandatory Florida trainings.
- Sexual Harassment Training to promote a harassment free environment with students and staff.
- Code of Ethics refresher courses.
- Misconduct reporting requirements.
- During the Investigation Review Team meeting process, the investigator is not in the room while the team members review findings and discuss, to avoid tainting the investigators perspective.
 - Being careful in introducing the cases to professional standards to avoid polluting those that will investigate the cases.
- One out of five investigators positions remain vacant.
- Timeline for filling out the misconduct form.
 - Legal sufficiency to support the allegation being made.
 - Transparency for revealing dishonesty discovered during the investigation to save an individual's reputation.
 - Substantiated or unsubstantiated evidence.
- The Know the Line Campaign stemmed from multiple sources.
- Progressive Discipline - multiple step 1's and 2's.
 - Alerts to assist when employee files are being reviewed, and they have multiple 1's and 2's.
 - Several verbal reprimands.
 - Rehabilitation training.
 - Tracking of verbal reprimands and safeguards in place.
 - Certain behaviors can skip steps.
 - Progressive Discipline and Due Process always have to be followed.
 - Forms for misconduct reports.
- The vetting process for individuals applying from other districts with discipline issues.
 - Department of Education (DOE) site checked.
 - Contact with prior supervisor.
 - Background check.
 - Statutory duty to disclose any prior discipline issues and employee has had.
- Gray area complaints but not enough evidence.
 - Documentation of pattern of complaints.
 - Reviews of substantiated and unsubstantiated evidence.
- Principals need to be coached a little more to ensure they are following solid hiring practices.
- Supervisors are now required to check the employee file before submitting an intent to hire to Human Resources.
- Information on a person's background, can be placed in a person's professional standards file.
- A bring back was requested for the total number of terminations broken down by year.
- A bring back for the number of online reporting forms translated into having interviews or being investigated.
 - A break down by category identifying the initial charge or concern.
- The professional standards file follows the individual when they want to be hired somewhere else.
- Suspensions must be board approved.
 - Suspension without pay is a disciplinary step.

- How those on the investigation review team are identified to staff members.
- Standard meeting dates for the investigation review team.
- Consistency of process.
- Clarification on the failure to manage student behavior in class or while on campus included in the contractual exceptions to progressive discipline.
 - Disagrees with the vagueness of this exception.
 - Office of General Counsel Attorney provided clarification.
- Case by case basis when evidence is not substantiated.
- All cases are different, but they all enter the disciplinary process.
- Initial case investigation process.
 - Appeal process.
 - Even after board decisions, the employee still has legal rights.
- District responsibility of reporting to DOE.
 - Auditing process.
- Systems in place with reporting.
- Health, safety, welfare and anything around legal sufficiency must be reported.
- Investigations and things the district endured to change the procedures and processes.
 - Identifying what could have been done differently.
 - Council of Great City Schools recommendations.
 - Various entities provided feedback.
- Continual improvement of processes.
- Appreciation was shared for Ms. Schultz and the presentation as well as for Dr. Bernier and his leadership.

The meeting was recessed at 11:03 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 11:14 a.m.

3. STRATEGIC PLAN/SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

Corey Wright, Assistant Superintendent, Accountability and Assessment, presented a PowerPoint Presentation to the Board on the Strategic Plan Review and Superintendent Evaluation Process. Discussion included the following:

- Historical context.
- Clear measurable goals and strategies.
- Guided principles and goals.
- Significant changes since the adoption of the plan in 2021.
 - Legislative changes.
 - Different standards.
- Changes in percentages of points for schools to earn a specific grade band.
- Four goals adopted by the Board.
- Congratulations was shared with Mr. Wright for his work in the creation of the Soft Skills - Duval Ready.
- A request was made for the Board to receive data around the literacy numbers.
 - Upcoming meetings in process.
- Superintendent evaluation process.
 - Evaluation model consist of 3 components.
- An explanation of why certain items were highlighted under the guiding principles.
- Recommendations.

- What the state expects from a Superintendent.
 - Revised evaluation tool.
- Opportunities to update the priorities of the Board and the District.
- Timing and timeline help the Board to decide when to evaluate.
- A recommendation was made for the Board to evaluate the evaluation instrument, revise the 3rd piece and then use isolation to ensure the Board has an evaluation tool to work on while working on the strategic plan.
- Core aspects of a refresh.
 - Revisit guiding principles without changing the nature of the plan.
 - Focus on academic and other performance outcomes.
 - Set expectations for annual outcomes.
- Address the highlighted items within the plan first, then make changes to make it relevant to ensure compliance with evaluation deadlines.
 - No pending deadline for Superintendent Evaluation.
 - Board desire to provide mid-year feedback to the Superintendent.
- More robust strategic plan.
- Suggestions for the strategic plan to be opened up to more measurements.
- Public facing score cards.
- Modification of the current evaluation tool.
- Opportunity for the Superintendent to create strategies and share the areas of focus.
 - Board measurements based upon what is presented by the Superintendent.
- Time frame and method for giving input.
- Revamping and supporting processes for governance.
- Unified effort.
- Consultant to work with the Board.
- The need for extra board member meetings.
- Review quantitative measures.
- The use of the Evaluation Subcommittee that was identified as Board Members Bolduc, Joyce and Pearson.
- Indicators will be sent via email to the Board Members by Mr. Wright.
- Data around where the district landed with the current strategic plan was requested as bring back.
- Preliminary dates.
 - Board Policy includes an overflow day.
 - Board members agreed to let the Superintendent and staff take the lead on scheduling the consultants to come in.
- Governance dates being worked on.
- Ensuring the public is informed about the strategic plan measurements.
 - Use of annual report.

4. GOVERNANCE

Members of the Board shared the following:

- A bring back request for the showcase data points.
 - Superintendent reevaluation of the school showcase.
 - Parent feedback shared.
- Feedback regarding school visits.
- Increasing the excitement in the community for DCPS schools.
- Phenomenal Career Technical Education (CTE) Fair.

- Reminder about the Town Hall meeting at Kernan Middle School.
- Fletcher High School construction paused.
- Communications with elected officials in Florida regarding the Duval Platform.
- Parent turnout at schools showcases.
- Variety of experiences from school to school.
- Parent volunteers.
- Appreciation regarding the discussion on HB733.
- Communication with constituents, teachers, students and business partners regarding school start times.
- Strategies for dealing with the funding shortage.
- Anticipation of unified coalition regarding school start times.
- Meeting with new Internal Board Auditor (IBA) to discuss the work that he is doing.
 - IBA was encouraged to meet with each Board Member individually.
 - Board Members were encouraged to share their expectations with the IBA.
- Board Members were encouraged to attend the Audit Advisory Committee (AAC) meetings.

Adjournment

1. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

That the Duval County School Board move to adjourn the meeting at 12:33 p.m.

Vote Results:

Motion: Cindy Pearson

Second: April A. Carney

PASSED - 7-0

Aye:

Cindy Pearson

April A. Carney

Charlotte D. Joyce

Darryl D. Willie

Melody A. Bolduc

Anthony Ricardo

Reginald Blount

Nay:

None

MA

Superintendent

Chairman