



Meeting Minutes Duval County Public Schools

November 6, 2025, Duval County School Board and City Council Joint Meeting

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

ATTENDANCE AT THIS JOINT MEETING OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL: All Board Members were present. Dr. Christopher Bernier, Superintendent, and Mr. William Spillias, Office of General Counsel were also present. *Vice-Chairman April A. Carney arrived at 10:07 a.m.*

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kevin Carrico (President), Nick Howland, Terrance Freeman, Mike Gay, Will Lahnen, Ken Amaro, Randy White, Chris Miller, Michael Boylan, Ron Salem, Raul Arias, Tyrone Clark-Murray, Rahman Johnson, and Ju'Coby Pittman.

City of Jacksonville Staff in Attendance: Kim Taylor and Phillip Peterson, Council Auditor's Office; Mary Staffopoulos and Carla Schell, Office of General Counsel; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research.

Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) Staff in Attendance: Micheal Ramirez, Chief of Staff, Jim Culbert, Chief Officer, Operations, Technology, Ron Fagan, Chief Financial Officer, Scott Schneider, Chief of Schools, Paula Renfro, Chief Officer Academic Services, Corey Wright, Chief Officer, Accountability and Assessment, Jill Fierle, Career and Technical Education Director, Heather Albritton, Health and Physical Education, Director, Sharwonda Peek, Assistant Superintendent, School Choice Pathways, Jacqueline Watkins, Chief Officer, Human Resources, Jackson Short, Chief Officer, School Police Admin, and Randy Gallup, Director, Facilities Planning and Program Management.

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order by City Council President Kevin Carrico at 10:01 a.m.

Council President Carrico opened the meeting with a warm welcome, followed by School Board Chairman Charlotte Joyce, who also greeted attendees and expressed her appreciation for their presence. Each City Council Member and School Board Member introduced themselves.

Items to be Discussed

1. ISSUES THAT WILL IMPACT GROWTH, FUNDING, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND WORK WITHIN THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE.

Dr. Bernier shared a presentation on the district's "A" grade. Discussion included the following:

- Ten (10) schools moved up two (2) letter grades.
- 2024-2025 Points of Pride.
- Celebrating the "A" and how we got here.
- School Grade Overview.
- Increase college and career readiness.
- "A" Rated School District and just how it was earned.
- Appreciation for Tallahassee.
- The forward path. The Board refreshed the strategic plan.
- Growing together.
- Moving towards having a good school system.
- Board Appreciation.
- How the joint meeting between the school board and city council came about.
 - Letters received from students regarding safety.
- Appreciation for Dr. Bernier being present.
- Student benchmarks.
- Teacher and staff input.
- Recruitment of African American male teachers.
- Efforts are being made to inspire students into the field of education.
- Students should see educators in a role that models what they look like.

Ms. Renfro, Dr. Albritton and Chief Short shared a presentation with everyone on the Be Safe. Be Seen. Initiative. The following were discussed:

- Student safety is divided into three (3) different categories, which includes getting the students to school and getting them from school.
- History shared regarding last year's tracked incidents of which included forty-three (43) students that were struck and three ended in fatalities.
- For the 2025-2026 school year there have been ten (10) students struck which included two (2) fatalities.
- Integrating safety discussions with health discussions.
- District wide initiative that protects students.
- Student leaderships that model safe behaviors. Students lead; Peers follow.
- Injury prevention.
- Shared responsibility.
- School Traffic Gardens.
- All City Council Members were invited to sign the Safety pledge.
- Crossing zones that do not have crossing guards.
- Safety concerns surrounding Merrill Road Elementary traffic pattern.
- Appreciation was shared for the work being done by Dr. Albritton.
- The number of accidents and the task force collaborating with the schools to self-identify.

- Increasing the number of school police and ensuring every school has one.
- Ensuring that middle and high school students have the same safety measures in place as elementary schools because middle and high school students are the students that are struck the most.
- Suggestions for distributing reflective gear to all students.
- A shout-out was given to Dr. Barnwell, Principal of Dupont Middle, for ensuring that the student school uniforms were brighter colors to promote student safety.
 - A suggestion was made for the colors of all student uniforms throughout the district to be a reflective color to improve visibility and promote student safety.

Chris LeDew, Chief of Traffic Engineering, shared a presentation regarding Traffic Lights, Sidewalks, Consolidation, and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Discussion included the following:

- Hybrid Walk Signals (HAWK) being installed at Atlantic Coast High School.
- A raised crosswalk was installed at Fishweir Elementary.
- School Safety Committee.
- A shoutout to the School Board Members that attended the meetings regarding traffic studies.
- Funding changed the way projects are prioritized.
- How sidewalk requests are managed.
- Future Issues.
- Consolidation of speed and bus enforcement cameras.
- New school construction.
- Charter and Private Schools.
- A request was made to have concerns regarding school zones moved to priority status.
- Appreciation was shared for Mr. Ledew for being present and the work done.
- Concerns and frustrations were shared regarding it; it takes 90 days to get lights working when students need to be kept safe.
- Explanation of the process for submitting priority projects.
- Frustrations shared regarding students dying and how long it took to implement policies and processes to keep students safe.
- A request was made to get real answers.
- Current things being implemented.
- Clarification regarding meeting requests.
- Installation time frames for HAWK signals to be installed at A. Phillip Randolph and First Coast High Schools.
- Sidewalk repair.
- Lack of familiarity with the process for the new light system.
- Rules regarding spacing.
- DCPS meets with the city regarding traffic studies.
- Things that can be done to increase the opportunity to have more crossing guards.
- The number of hot spots where students are jaywalking.
 - The point at which citations will be written.
- Motorists who fail to yield.
 - Suggestion for construction of an arm with a light. Appreciation was shared for the crossing guards, but sometimes cars just do not stop.

The scheduled presentation on DCPS career training programs was postponed to a later meeting due to time constraints.

President Carrico and Board Chairman Joyce shared closing remarks.

Adjournment

1. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

MA

Superintendent

Chairman