

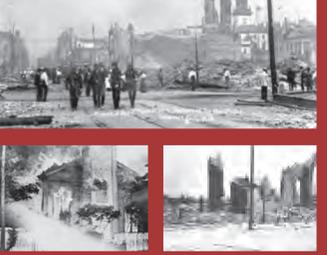
Public Schools in Duval County

Spring 1864
J.M. Hawks opens first free public school in the state, attracting equal number of white and black students, all but three white leave.

Mar. 1869
Duval County's first Board of Public Instruction is appointed by the state Board of Education, with five members. Later this year, the first Superintendent of Public Instruction is appointed.

1894
James Weldon Johnson, who attended Stanton where his mother taught, takes over as principal of Stanton. (Johnson becomes famous for several things, including writing the Negro National Anthem.) There are 1,000 students and 25 teachers at the school.

1900
Duval County spends \$12.04 per pupil for white students; \$5.47 per pupil for black students.

1901
The Great Fire


1950
48,000
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1953
J. Irving Scott is named director of Negro education for the Duval County public school system. He served in that role until 1960.

1955
66,542
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1957
381,700
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1960
Discrimination suit is filed by NAACP in U.S. District Court on behalf of two black students refused admission to white schools in the county. Suit claims School Board operates racially segregated schools and that racial factors are used in determining placement. School officials later acknowledge that all 89 white and 24 black schools were totally segregated by students, teachers and administrators.

1962
Due to poor conditions in schools and lack of financial support, the Chamber of Commerce initiates a citizens' School Bootstrap Committee, chaired by attorney Harry Kinkaid, to examine problems in the system.

Nov. 1963
The Bootstrap Committee issues its report, a call to action urging the community to mobilize to reform public schools. Report severely criticizes the curriculum, physical conditions, administration and finances of system, saying teachers and students are the primary victims. Teachers are poorly paid, resources limited, classrooms overcrowded. Dropout rate is high. School policies affected by 8 different elected boards with much conflict and overlap. The elected superintendent, only elected one among 20 largest systems in the nation, rarely makes unpopular decisions. System has severe lack of financial support. Report concludes taxpayers are not doing their share.

Dec. 1964
After repeated warning 15 Duval County schools are discredited by SACS due to lack of financial support, including Fletcher, Forrest, Raines, Parker, Englewood, Ribault, Butler, Paxon, Lee, Stanton, Baldwin and Jackson. (40,000 people had signed petitions urging SACS to delay discreditation.)

Dec. 1967
Judge Simpson rules the Single System Geographic Plan has failed to create a unitary school system and orders the establishment of a single system for all grades; decrees students can no longer transfer to schools of their choice.

1969
Cecil Hardesty becomes the first appointed superintendent.

Dec. 1975
NAACP asks Judge Tjoflat to hold School Board in contempt for failing to comply with 1971 court order.

1970
114,045
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1971
Last of discredited high schools regains SACS accreditation.

Apr. 1981
School Board unanimously elects Wendell Holmes as its first black chairman.

Stanton College Preparatory School opens as the county's first academic magnet school.

1969
Cecil Hardesty becomes the first appointed superintendent.

U.S. District Judge William McRae orders integration of all public school teachers in Duval County based on a ratio of 70 percent white and 30 percent black.

1970
114,045
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1971
Last of discredited high schools regains SACS accreditation.

U.S. District Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat orders School Board to implement full desegregation through massive cross-town busing. Reluctant School Board complies by busing African-American 1st-5th graders across town to suburban white schools, establishing 6th and 7th grade centers in inner city to bus white students, and making marginal changes in redistricting high schools. There are 113 totally segregated schools, 89 white and 24 black.

Eighteen core city black schools are closed.

1869
A.J. Russell

1869-1870
W.L. Coan

1871-1873
W.H. Christy

1874
E. F. Mawbey

1875-1877
John F. Rollins

1877-1880
Frederick Pasco

1880-1888
W.H. Babcock

1888
Walter B. Clarkson

1889-1891
William M. Ledwith

1891-1897
J.D. Mead

1897-1905
George P. Glenn

1905-1907
Hiram H. Palmer

1869 1907 SUPERINTENDENTS

THE FIRST CENTURY

1868
Stanton Normal Institute has 400 students and seven teachers.

1873
Second Board of Education is established via public election. The first graduating class of Duval County High School numbers three. Duval High is the first high school in state with its own building and faculty.

1877
1,252
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1883
2,665
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1898
1898

1900
6,795
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1900
39,733
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1914
9,861
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1914
75,163
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1914
Duval County OKs \$1 million bond issue to fund major expansion plan, replacing wooden schools with brick buildings.

1942
Following a suit by Mary White Blocker, an African American teacher, the court orders a single salary schedule be applied to all teachers, regardless of race. (Blocker, forced to retire after she filed suit, continued to receive her pay through the Duval County Negro Teachers Association for 23 years.)

YEARS OF TURMOIL: DISACCREDITATION & DESEGREGATION

1954
In *Brown v. Board of Education*, U.S. Supreme Court rules segregation in public schools is unconstitutional.

1959
Times-Union reports that 47 schools lack proper safety features, resulting in \$35 million bond issue for capital improvements.

1960
U.S. District Judge Bryan Simpson says the school system violates *Brown v. Board of Education*, saying a dual, segregated system exists in Duval County. He orders the School Board to stop operating a compulsory biracial school system and to develop plans for the total elimination of a segregated school system.

Aug. 1962
102,000
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1962
455,411
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

Sep. 1962
Two years after Ruby Bridges becomes the first black child to desegregate an elementary school in the South, the School Board proposes a plan for neighborhood schools open to all students living nearby, integrating initially in the first and second grades, then one additional grade a year thereafter. Known as a Single System Geographic Plan to End Segregation, the plan was to integrate all 12 grades by 1974.

Dec. 1963
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools threatens to withdraw accreditation in a year because of instructional deficiencies. The public refuses to accept reevaluation of property or additional taxes to improve school funding. Duval County is spending \$299 per student; the state average spending per student is \$372.

Spring 1964
George Peabody College of Teachers in Nashville is commissioned by School Board and superintendent to study Duval school finances, curriculum, teacher training and host of other issues.

1965
Peabody report broadly criticizes school system. Cites a lack of materials, overcrowded classrooms, lack of supervisory skills, financial handicaps, failure to require certificates for teachers to hold certificates for subjects being taught. Concludes the prestige of public education in Duval County has deteriorated steadily for two generations.

1965
125,000
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1965
508,900
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1968
The governments of the City of Jacksonville and Duval County merge into one unified and consolidated government.

1968
School budget is \$68 million, compared with \$34 million in 1964.

Teachers statewide, including those in Duval County — black and white — walk off the job to protest the state Legislature's method of funding public education.

YEARS OF REPAIR: MEETING NEW DEMANDS

1975
Duval Teachers United is created in a merger of Duval Teacher Association (affiliated with NEA) and Jacksonville Federation of Teachers (affiliated with AFT) and Florida State Teachers Association, an organization representing black teachers.

1975
JCCI study on desegregation finds a gradual resegregating of the schools has taken place since the court order and that 6th & 7th grade centers are not educationally sound. Study says schools need more involvement of citizens in definition and development of standards, goals and curriculum. School Board should review its policy regarding evaluation of supervisors and teachers to identify personnel who need to be counseled or terminated.

Apr. 1977
102,828
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1977
568,000
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1974
101,000
PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

1974
571,003
DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION

1980
Cabinet resolution praises Ribault achievement

Timeline of Major Events

1864 – 2022



This timeline was originally commissioned by The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida in 2005, at the time of their launch of the Quality Education for All initiative. It was updated by the Jacksonville Public Education Fund in 2014 in commemoration of the Community Foundation's 50th anniversary, and was updated in 2022 by the Jacksonville Public Education Fund. To learn more, visit www.jaxpef.org.

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 Family of Willye Dennis, Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville Community Council, Inc., The Florida Times-Union archives, State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Ed Foster, <http://floridamemory.com/items/show/28657>; Foundation for Excellence in Education, Alan Alfaro, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Ingrid Damiani



YEARS OF REPAIR

1985 School Board votes to ask U.S. District Judge John Moore II to lift the 1971 court order.

Dec. 1986 NAACP goes back to court claiming segregation has increased since the 1971 ruling. Judge Moore, however, closes the desegregation case, meaning the court will no longer monitor the School Board's efforts to achieve integration.

1989 School Board recommends another bond issue. Task force led by Charles E. Hughes Jr., president of Florida National Bank, and Ronnie Ferguson, president of the Jacksonville Urban League, holds public meetings and champions a \$195 million issue. Emphasis is on new schools in the south and southeast parts of the county, but also a new Northside high school and improvements to Raines and Ribault high schools.

1990 11th Circuit Court of Appeals calls Moore's decision "clearly erroneous," reverses the ruling and says the system should remain under court order.

1991 School Board approves year-round schooling.

1993 JCCI study finds the school system lacks clear vision of high-quality public education, clear measures of educational outcomes and a process to improve quality.

1995 School Advisory Councils begin statewide.

1996 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is designated as the evaluation tool to measure how well students are learning the skills outlined in the Sunshine State Standards, replacing Florida Writes, Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills and others. The FCAT also is used to measure school achievement with a formula that rewards schools for high achievements or marked improvements.

1998 New Century Commission on Education, appointed by the School Board and mayor as a community effort to set directions for the school district, expresses concern about overall quality of education in Duval County. Recommends 155 new initiatives.

Aug. 1998 Superintendent Fryer brings standards-based education to Duval County.

2001 Non-profit Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership established to provide educators in Northeast Florida counties of Duval, Baker, Clay, Nassau and St. Johns with professional development services for educators.

2002 Sweeping accountability measures at the state and national levels create new systems to evaluate and improve how well schools are performing. Under statewide grading plan, Ds or Fs. Meanwhile, the 2001 national No Child Left Behind legislation aims to measure and close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students.

2003 Passing FCAT becomes a requirement for graduation and a requirement for promotion of third-graders.

2005 The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida launches Quality Education for All, a 10-year initiative focused on improving public education in Duval County. It leads to more than \$40 million in private investment in public education and the creation of the Jacksonville Public Education Fund in 2009.

Sep. 2005 Thirty-four years after federal courts ordered Duval County schools desegregated, more than one third of the county's public schools have student bodies of predominantly one race. During the height of desegregation, the goal was to have all schools achieve at least a 70/30 ratio of majority/minority students. In 2005, 47 percent of the county's high schools do not meet that goal; 38 percent of middle schools do not and 32 percent of elementary schools do not meet that goal.

2012 A major leadership transition leads to the election of four new school board members and the appointment of Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti as superintendent.

2013 The community Foundation for Northeast Florida establishes the Quality Education for All Fund as an almost \$40 million pool of private dollars invested in programs and initiatives to attract high quality teachers and leaders for Duval County Public Schools. Jacksonville Public Education Fund administers the QEA Fund, a long-term deep investment in human capital-focused school improvement efforts. Investments include fellowships, leadership programs and performance incentives.

AN ERA OF CHANGE: NEW CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

1985 Voters defeat by 689 votes a \$113 million school bond issue designed to finance a 13-year school construction program. Advocates blame failure by school officials to promote need community-wide and failure to emphasize improvements in the black community.

1988 Judge Moore rules the school system has eliminated the vestiges of segregation and is operating a unitary school system.

1990 Willye Dennis, President of the local NAACP, reopens the federal desegregation lawsuit to force the School Board to renegotiate more equitable terms. School Board and NAACP reach agreement on a plan that stops forced busing and creates a system of magnet programs in an attempt to voluntarily desegregate the schools by drawing children out of single-race neighborhoods.

1992 Full Service Schools program begins, using schools to house community agencies to provide education, medical, social and other human services to children and their families.

1995 Jacksonville Chamber launches "Academy for World Class Education" as a way to educate business leaders about the school system and prepare them to be partners and advocates. Program's weaknesses were little mechanism for action and failure to involve the local education system.

1997 School Board seeks to have federal court declare it fully desegregated, prompting a three-week trial in which witnesses say two-thirds of schools have reached racial balance goals, but elementary schools in core city remain mostly black.

1999 U.S. District Judge William Terrell Hodges rules public schools are being run without racial discrimination to the maximum extent possible.

2000 Jacksonville's Duval Public Education Foundation is folded into the non-profit Alliance for World Class Education, which brings together business and community leaders to help improve the local education system.

2002 Duval Teachers United, School Board, and business community established Creating Opportunities that Result in Excellence (CORE) to offer financial incentives to teachers whose students' performance improves at low-performing schools. Council of Great City Schools Management Assessment Project declares management of Duval County Public Schools to be outstanding in many respects, but also finds key functional areas that need improvement. Makes 145 recommendations for improvement.

2002 Florida voters approve a constitutional amendment requiring access to public pre-K education throughout Florida.

Fall 2002 Alliance for World Class Education, with support from Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce, begins to target school board races in search of a broader range of candidates with strong ties to the community and related backgrounds rather than the norm of retired teachers and PTA presidents.

2004 JCCI report "Eliminating the Achievement Gap" finds absence of ongoing dialogue with citizens, inadequate childcare facilities to prepare children for kindergarten, lack of teacher compensation and inadequate help for low-performing students. Recommendations include increased funding for preschool education, better teacher compensation and academic help for all students not performing at their grade level.

Jun. 2005 Duval County schools receive the best grades since 1999, based primarily on the FCATs taken in grades 3 to 10: 71 As, 23 Bs, 43 Cs and 12 Ds. Six Duval County schools are named among the top 100 schools in Florida.

2011 The Jacksonville Public Education Fund launches ONE by ONE, a campaign to rally the community to set a collective vision for public education and carry it out. The need to invest in quality teachers and leaders are identified by the community among other priorities.

2012 The community and district reflect on a five-year plan to reduce the drop-out rate in Duval County. Through several targeted approaches, community investment in support systems, and policy changes, Duval County saw an 11% increase in the graduation rate from 2005. The success of the Learning to Finish partnership is lauded as an example of organizational collaboration and communication.

1907 1997

SUPERINTENDENTS

- 1907-1913 James Q. Palmer
- 1913-1925 F.A. Hathaway
- 1925-1928 G. Elmer Wilbur
- 1928-1933 R. B. Rutherford
- 1933-1941 R. C. Marshall
- 1941-1953 W. Daniel Boyd
- 1953-1957 Iva T. Sprinkle
- 1957-1969 Ish Brant
- 1969-1973 Cecil Hardesty
- 1973-1976 John T. Gunning
- 1976-1989 Herb A. Sang
- 1989-1997 Larry L. Zenke

JPEF FOUNDING BOARD

Honorable Henry Adams, Jr.
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Community Volunteer

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Preston H. Haskell, Chairman
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Shannon Perry, Ph.D.
President
Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida

Delores Barr Weaver
The Weaver Family Foundation

Superintendent Ed Pratt-Dannals (ex-officio)
Duval County Public Schools

Honorable Tommy Hazouri (ex officio)
Duval County School Board, Chairman

Frederick H. Schultz (Honorary)
Schultz Investments



AN ERA OF CHANGE: PROGRESS AND PANDEMIC

2013

DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION: 872,598

PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 126,849

Dec 2013

Real School
Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti
Superintendent of Schools

Duval County posts a graduation rate of 72.1 percent, representing a rapid and steady increase from 55.8 percent five years prior.

2015

As the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data are released, Duval tops the list of urban districts on the Nation's Report Card. Of 21 other large urban districts, Duval ranks fourth in 4th grade Reading, fourth in 4th grade Math, and second in 8th grade Reading, though seventh in 8th grade Math. Duval led the pack in its outcomes for students with disabilities - as first or second ranked on all assessments. Duval also ranked highly in African American and Hispanic student NAEP performance landing in the top four large urban districts on most assessments.

2017

The Schools of Hope legislation is passed by the Florida State Legislature, creating incentives for public charter schools to open in areas where traditional public schools have been failing. This changes the landscape of public schools in Duval County and across the state as more charter schools make plans to open.

2017

DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION: 939,167

PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 129,479

2020

A global pandemic, COVID-19, results in communities across the world including Duval County dramatically shifting instructional practices to protect students, families, and educators' lives. At the end of the 2019-2020 school year, schools close, and students stay home as the district quickly develops a digital interface to facilitate remote learning. DCPS also provides laptops, hot spots, and meals for students. As vaccines are developed and rolled out to the public with young children the last to be approved for the vaccine, students return to school at the start of 2020-2021 wearing masks to protect them. Schools offer hybrid learning options for students although teachers are deemed essential workers. Students learning from home or with masks and teachers instructing through the same, characterize a uniquely challenging period. Partners like Jacksonville Public Education Fund offer support for educators through hybrid formats, as direct service providers like City Year and Communities in Schools adopt a similar approach to providing student support. National reports of learning loss amid the pandemic begin to surface.

2018

Dr. Diana Greene begins her tenure as Duval County Public Schools Superintendent. She is the first woman and first Black person to hold that position. Dr. Patricia Willis, another African American woman who earlier served as Deputy Superintendent, served as interim Superintendent after Nikolai Vitti stepped down as DCPS Superintendent while the School Board implemented its process to identify Dr. Greene as the permanent district leader.

2019

Duval County's graduation rate reaches an all-time high of 86.5% of high school seniors graduating in the 2018-2019 school year. Graduation rates would climb again in 2019-2020, continuing a 10-year-trend, but the later increase was in part attributed to waiving some state assessments due to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19.

2020

DUVAL COUNTY POPULATION: 966,728

PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 133,004

2021

To address Duval County's aging school buildings, the oldest in Florida, and to make up for a decade-long funding shortfall at the state level, 67% of Jacksonville voters approve a half cent sales tax increase to raise nearly \$2 billion to fund improved school facilities in Duval over the next 15 years. The vote follows a contentious debate as to whether Jacksonville's City Council would let the community decide on the referendum, given the district's plan to focus on the age and condition of school buildings. The state legislature's decision through HB 7069 to require school districts to share revenues with charter schools ends the debate.

2021

At the recommendation of Duval Schools Superintendent Dr. Diana Greene, the Duval County School Board votes to rename all six remaining schools named for Confederate leaders. Following a community engagement process, Jean Ribault Middle and High School as well as Andrew Jackson High School, which were under consideration due to concerns of insensitivity to Indigenous people, retain their names as there was not as much community consensus to change those schools' names.

2022

Despite the disruptions from the global pandemic, Duval County Schools see an increase in A, B, and C-rated schools for the third year in a row, with 93% of the schools receiving a C grade or higher.

2022

PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 127,037

2022

Partners focused on providing support for Duval County's children and youth join forces to launch the READ JAX campaign to address long-term literacy proficiency challenges with a focus on improving results for students by 3rd grade. This is also an important response to the learning loss that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021

Jacksonville Public Education Fund, Duval County Public Schools and the University of North Florida partner with other local organizations to launch a coordinated strategy, 1000 by 2025 initiative, to build a more diverse teacher pipeline for Jacksonville's future. The initiative focuses on increasing the number of Latino and Black male teachers serving Duval County students to improve representation among educators.

2022

53% of voters approve a one mill property tax referendum, making Duval County the 21st Florida district to pass a millage referendum for education. Against the backdrop of a significant teacher shortage and growing instructional vacancies, the additional property tax will allow the district to provide teachers, particularly veteran teachers, with additional compensation and upgrade equipment and uniforms in the arts as well as fields, bleachers, and playgrounds in athletics. Charter schools will get a proportionate share based upon enrollment, as required by the state.

1997-2022 SUPERINTENDENTS

- 1997 Donald Van Fleet
- 1998-2004 John C. Fryer, Jr.
- 2005 Nancy Snyder
- 2005-2007 Joseph Wise
- 2007-2012 Ed Pratt-Dannals
- 2012-2017 Nikolai Vitti
- 2017-2018 Patricia Willis
- 2018-Present Diana Greene

“We have seen progress in education in Duval County over the past decade, including increased graduation rates, better school scores, and increased compensation for teachers. With the community's continued support of public education we will make even more progress towards an educational system where all students can succeed.”

- Judge Brian Davis
JPEF Board of Directors
2009-2022