



Featured Speaker

Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti

Superintendent, Duval County Public Schools

Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti is Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools (DCPS), the nation's 16th largest school district, serving over 127,000 students through a 1.7 billion dollar budget. He started his tenure in November, 2012 with an ambitious 100 Day plan that included numerous community engagement activities such as town hall meetings and sessions with employees, parents, students, the business community, education non-profits, the faith based community, and the media. He inspired the Jacksonville community to recommit to public education and, with the School Board, used the engagement process to develop a new Strategic Plan that focused on four central goals: 1) Developing great educators and leaders 2) Ensuring equitable and efficient use of resources 3) Engaging parents, caregivers, and the community 4) Developing the whole child.

Particular pride is taken with Dr. Vitti's success in narrowing the achievement gap over the past two years where the district closed the achievement gap among African American students. Among the large 7 districts in Florida, the district now ranks 1st in Math, 3rd in reading, and 3rd in overall graduation rate regarding the achievement gap. The 3.6 percentage point increase in graduation among

African American students was 4 times the state average and the highest among the large 7 Florida. The achievement gap was also narrowed for all accelerated components including participation and performance in AP, IB, Dual Enrollment, and College Readiness in Reading and Math.

Since starting his tenure, Dr. Vitti has been named Superintendent of the Year for Arts Education by the Florida Arts Educators Association. The district earned first place for its website among large districts in Florida, and the Budget and Financial Office was awarded the Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting by the Association of School Board Officials International and the Government Finance Officers Association. In addition, the First Coast Worksite Wellness Council and the Mayor's Council on Fitness and Well-Being awarded the district the First Coast Healthiest Companies Silver Level Award for achievements in employee wellness and the City of Jacksonville awarded the district the 2014 Environmental Green Champions Achievement Award for reducing water and energy consumption, conserving natural resources through recycling, and providing education to improve our environment.

Prior to being named Superintendent of Duval County, Dr. Vitti served on the cabinet of three National Superintendents of the Year. Most recently, he was the Chief Academic Officer of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) which won the Broad Prize for Excellence in Urban Excellence in 2013. As the Chief Academic Officer, he led the 66 lowest-performing schools in the county while also driving the work of Language Arts/Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Career and Technical Education, Early Childhood Education/Head Start, School Improvement, Title I, HIPPIY, Title II and Summer Programs district-wide for over 320 schools.

Prior to serving at the district's Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Vitti was the Assistant Superintendent of the Education Transformation Office (ETO) where he autonomously led a region of 26 schools identified as "persistently lowest-achieving" by the USDOE/FLDOE. Under his leadership, the 26 ETO schools increased in almost all areas of school accountability and all previously identified Intervene Schools (lowest performing category) improved and avoided sanctions. In addition, each of the 10 high schools improved their graduation rate by an average of 12 percentage points and participation and performance in Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment and Industry Certification courses significantly increased through an emphasis on infusing a college-going culture in secondary schools. Under his leadership, ETO was recognized as a model for urban education and turnaround by both the USDOE/FLDOE.

Before returning to Miami to lead ETO, Dr. Vitti served as Deputy Chancellor of Schools Improvement and Student Achievement at the FLDOE as well as Bureau Chief of School Improvement/Executive Director for Region One/Lead Director for DA. In these roles, he led statewide professional development for superintendents, district administrators, principals, and teachers on school improvement initiatives. He also guided the work of five regional offices that directly served the state's lowest performing schools and their districts. He managed the Bureaus of School Improvement, Federal Education Programs, Family and Community Outreach, Federal Programs, Early Learning, Just Read Florida!, and Equal Educational Opportunities.

Before joining the FLDOE, Dr. Vitti served as principal of Homestead Middle in M-DCPS, where he moved the school from a "D" to a high "B" and improved the school in each accountability area. Before his appointment as principal, Dr. Vitti joined the cabinet of M-DCPS as the Knowledge Management Officer, where he was responsible for coordinating multiple district-wide initiatives. Prior to working in Miami, Dr. Vitti played an instrumental role in transforming the educational culture of a 4,000 student high school in the Bronx, New York. Dr. Vitti began his educational career as a teacher at both the high school and middle school level in North Carolina and New York where he notably raised student achievement at each school.

Dr. Vitti received the prestigious Presidential Scholarship from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and was a member of the Urban Superintendent Program, which has developed a number of successful superintendents throughout the country. In 2012, he completed his doctorate from Harvard in Education, Administration, Planning and Social Policy. He received his masters in the same field from Harvard. Dr. Vitti also holds a Masters in Education from Wake Forest University where he was awarded a Master Teacher Fellowship, and a B.A. in History. As an undergraduate, he earned Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa recognition. Dr. Vitti is married with four school-age children who all attend public schools.

