

Discovery High School
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
1/17/2023

The following members were present:

Carol Fulks	Executive Director/Treasurer
Nancy Daley	Chairperson/Community Member
Charlotte Butler	Community Member
John Taylor	Community Member
Doretha Tillman	Community Member
Mary Pulse	Secretary

Nancy Daley welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM.

Minutes

A motion was made by John Taylor to accept the 8/9/22 minutes as written.
Doretha Tillman seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report

George Miarecki, CPA, reviewed the financial statements with the Board line item by line item.

Mr. Miarecki said Discovery High School owes Discovery Middle School \$437,000.

Mr. Miarecki said the food service expenditures need to be monitored more closely.

Mr. Miarecki said when comparing the actual vs the projected budget, we are negative for cash. We are waiting on reimbursement of ESSER grants. The ESSER funds are separated into various categories.

Mr. Miarecki said we are 3% off on revenue but making it up on salaries.

Mr. Miarecki presented the 2021-2022 audit findings. He directed the board members to look at pages 1-5 for a review of the entire audit. Discovery High School is at a deficit of \$383,000. It was not a great year financially for DHS due to ESSER funds not being received yet. With the increase of teacher salaries combined with enrollment being down (74 students) it was clear we would be looking at a negative deficit.

Mr. Miarecki also said we need to keep in mind that losing Title 1 funding was a huge loss.

On a more positive note, Mr. Miarecki said once we receive our ESSER funds and add more students we will be in a much more stable financial scenario.

Nancy Daley inquired about the management letter. Mr. Miarecki said at the back of the audit we always receive clean letters because we follow policy and regulations to the letter.

Charlotte Butler made a motion to approve the 2021-2022 audit. John Taylor seconded the motion, and it was passed by a unanimous vote.

President's Report

Carol Fulks stated the enrollment for Discovery High School as of 1/10/23 is at 888 students, 254 in 9th grade, 244 in 10th grade, 189 in 11th grade and 201 in 12th grade. The waitlist has 156 applications: 92 in 9th grade, 36 in 10th grade, 23 in 11th grade and 5 in 12th grade.

Mrs. Fulks then presented the personnel actions. The personnel actions were put to a vote and Charlotte Butler voted to accept, seconded by Doretha Tillman. The Personnel Actions were passed with a unanimous vote.

Nancy Daley asked if we have incentives to stay so there will not be so much teacher turnover. Mrs. Fulks said we offer returning bonuses each year for all staff.

Carissa Frazier, Asst Principal at DHS also interjected that there were a couple teachers that did not return due to recertification issues. Doretha Tillman said you can recertify through the county for free.

Mrs. Fulks said since the August Board Meeting we have been able to fill many positions with certified teachers.

Old Business

Mrs. Fulks said open enrollment at DHS will take place from January 17th – January 30, 2023.

Nancy Daley said we she will post open enrollment information on the Lake Alfred website to promote students applying to Discovery.

New Business

Mrs. Fulks presented the Reunification Plan/Safe Schools Disaster Preparedness. Mrs. Daley said she is very impressed with the plan. Mrs. Fulks said it has to be exact since in an emergency situation we have 4-8 minutes before police arrive and take over the situation.

John Taylor made a motion to approve the Reunification plan and Doretha Tillman seconded the motion. It was passed by a unanimous vote.

Transportation

Mark Whitehead told the board that transportation is facing staffing issues with bus drivers over the last few years. We need 28 drivers for a full staff and only have 21. Beginning in 2023-2024 we will only offer transportation to students within a 10 mile radius of the school.

Mr. Whitehead said we have lost 6 drivers just since the school year began in August. We have even hired a transportation coordinator (Betty Newman) but since we are so short-staffed, Ms. Newman is forced to drive a bus as well.

Mrs. Fulks said there is a letter being drafted to parents regarding the bus driver shortage and future plans.

Mrs. Fulks said there is a nationwide shortage of bus drivers and Polk County alone is 200 drivers short.

Nancy Daley asked if we pay enough. Mr. Whitehead said we pay \$18.00 to start and PCSB pays \$16.25 to start.

Mr. Whitehead told the board that we must send our newly hired drivers to a mandatory training in Polk County and the trainers at PCSB are trying to recruit our drivers to come work for the county.

We have started to offer a bonus to current drivers who recruit.

Nancy Daley requested confirmation on when the new bus routes will take effect. Mr. Warren said with the 2023-2024 school year and at this time will affect approximately 200 families.

Mr. Warren said the Open Enrollment acceptance letters will tell parents up front whether or not we will have transportation for their child.

Mrs. Daley said she is working with Citrus connection to get more buses in the area which may help.

Mrs. Fulks said the many new developments so close to school may help. Mrs. Daley said the new developers are getting approval from county on adding so many new homes and the schools will not have the availability for all the new students.

Mrs. Fulks said we wanted the board to be aware of this situation and how we anticipate handling it in the future.

Mrs. Daley asked if we expect fallout and Mrs. Fulks said possibly. Mr. Taylor asked if this would affect enrollment and Mr. Warren said possibly but we can accept more students who are closer to school.

Board Member Report

Doretha Tillman asked if we are trying to get Title 1 back at DHS.

Mr. Warren said that PCSB would need to approve us to be a Title 1 school again and this is tough since it's taking students from them.

Nancy Daley asked if we could use a priority for free/reduced lunch students? Mr. Warren said we do not.

Mrs. Fulks said once a plan has been finalized, she will share with the board.

Mrs. Butler wished everyone a happy new year and thanked Mrs. Fulks for the Christmas basket.

Dan Bitter (DHS teacher representative) asked if there will be merit raises in the future and was this decision a PCSB one or a Discovery one?

Mrs. Fulks said the elimination of merit raises came from the county.

Mr. Bitter said teachers are getting frustrated with no incentive to do their best since the merit raises are gone.

The meeting was adjourned by Nancy Daley at 9:10 AM

Next Meeting: March 7, 2023
In the Discovery Academy of Lake
Alfred Media Center upon
adjournment of the Discovery
Academy 8:30 board meeting.