

**Discovery High School**  
Governing Board Meeting Minutes  
**09/25/2024**  
**AMENDED**

The following members were present:

Nancy Daley	Chairperson/Community Member
Charlotte Butler	Community Member
John Taylor	Community Member
Doretha Tillman	Community Member
Terry Gier	Community Member
Tania Sims	Secretary

Nancy Daley welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Ms. Daley introduced Dana Vignale and Christine Mentis to the board meeting.

**Treasurer's Report**

George Miarecki, CPA, reviewed the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation.

Mr. Miarecki said that the TSIA is a charter plan document that Discovery Schools does to inform the district and state on how Discovery Schools will to allocated the money.

Mr. Miarecki stated that when he did the calculation with Discovery Schools previous half percent increase, it wasn't quite enough to use up the funds. He did a new calculation using up all the funds, it ended up being a 1.93% increase for all teachers, guidance counselors and coaches.

Mr. Miarecki said that the district based the payment and also the amount on 1,880 students, 900 at Discovery High school and 980 Discovery Academy.

Mr. Miarecki stated that the new salary will start in October.

Mr. John Taylor made a motion to approve teacher salary increase allocation. Ms. Doretha Tillman seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

**President's Report**

Mr. Jemison explained about the Phoenix program. He said that it is the drug awareness program that the district uses when they have kids that are in trouble for drugs or alcohol. Mr. Jemison said that instead of Discovery High dismissing students, they are able to set

the Phoenix program up where the students have to complete it within 30 days. Discovery High can keep the students at the school, but the students can only do this once.

Mr. Jemison stated that the student will be given a five days suspension. The student will have to contact Mark Wilcox Center and set up the Phoenix program. At the end of suspension, they return to Discovery High and the students have 30 days to complete this program.

Ms. Butler made a motion to approve the Phoenix program. Ms. Doretha Tillman seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

### **Board Member Report**

Ms. Daley shared a letter from Polk County Public Schools.

Ms. Daley said that PCSB saw DHS board minutes from the meeting on June 27, and PCSB deduced that DHS were in state of financial emergency. Ms. Daley stated that Mr. Warren and her have gone over all of the criteria for financial emergency and they don't agree.

Ms. Daley said that PCSB required DHS to put together a **corrective action plan**, which is by Florida statute, and it would go to the Florida Department of Education. Ms. Daley stated that there is a deadline of October 4, 2024.

Ms. Daley said that PCSB wants copies of Discovery Schools forensic audit, and copies of whatever Discovery High has been doing to resolve the situation.

Ms. Daley shared a draft of the **corrective action plan** she was working on for DHS. Ms. Daley stated in the **corrective action plan**, she pointed out that DHS never missed a payment or payroll. DHS has been working on an action plan since last October. DHS started a lot more marketing, aggressively recruiting students, more community events and revamping transportation.

Ms. Daley asked if the school capacity and the contract allow Discovery High to go up to 950 students?

Mr. Jemison said that DHS can possibly get between 925 and 930 by next school year.

Ms. Daley asked Ms. Mentis and Ms. Vignale to share their input.

Ms. Vignale shared that they work with a lot of small charter schools, as well as others with challenges and they are able to balance their budgets. Ms. Vignale said that with 800 plus students Discovery High should very well be able to present annually a balanced budget, with at least 5 % reserved annually, which will get Discovery High well beyond where it needs to be.

Ms. Vignale said that they do often work with schools who are in situations where they have broken their bond covenants. One school last year was taken from eight days cash on hand to 46 days cash on hand.

Ms. Vignale stated that the hard conversation is not just about increasing enrollment, but DHS has to take a hard look at how they are operating and really operate within their means.

Ms. Vignale said that just in their brief visit, Discovery schools have a lot of kids, a very healthy number of students that allows the schools to operate properly.

Ms. Vignale recommended that the school budget should be driven from the school sites, after carving out what she calls the non-negotiables, the operational expenses, etc. And then really having the school sites drive the conversation on what are our needs versus what are our wants. And what is the way that we can achieve at 5 % reserve balance, which is really what your ultimate goal should be.

Ms. Vignale shared that working with schools in the past, typically, what the districts do appreciate is looking at a five-year budget projection that does show that reserve set aside as well.

Ms. Daley asked Mr. Miarecki if it was possible to do a five-year projection for Discovery High before she sends the corrective action plan. Mr. Miarecki replied saying he is able to create a five-year projection plan.

Ms. Vignale recommended to present to the district a 3 % reserve with the existing number of FTE, and then maybe 4 % next year and 5 % the following year with incremental increases in enrollment.

Ms. Vignale stated that a school of DHS size and with the debt service that DHS is paying, there's no need to pass budgets that are not with at least 5 % reserve, and closely monitoring the school's performance on how DHS is trending on those expenses on a monthly basis.

The meeting was adjourned by Nancy Daley at 9:51 A.M.

**Next Meeting: October 8th, 2024**  
Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred  
Media Center at 9:15 A.M.