

DISCOVERY HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Monthly Governing Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Time: 9:15 AM to 9:59 AM

Location: Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred

Presiding Officer: Nancy Daley, Chairperson

Minutes Prepared By: Tania Sims, Secretary

The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Discovery High School Governing Board was called to order at 9:15 AM by Nancy Daley, Chairperson.

Board Members Present:

- Kevin Warren, President/Treasurer
- Nancy Daley, Chairperson/Community Member
- Charlotte Butler, Community Member
- Doretha Tillman, Community Member
- John Taylor, Community Member
- Tania Sims, Secretary

Board Members Absent:

None

Others in Attendance:

- Gordon Crozier, CFO from Building Hope
- Jemison Darryl, Principal
- Adam Phelps, Teacher of the Year

I. Approval of Previous Minutes

Main motion: Moved by Doretha Tillman to approve the minutes from the July 28, 2025, meeting as written. John Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

II. Principal's Report

A. Principal's Enrollment Update – Mr. Jemison

Mr. Jemison provided the following enrollment update for the 2025–2026 school year:

- **Current Enrollment:** 906 total students
 - 9th Grade: 277
 - 10th Grade: 235
 - 11th Grade: 206
 - 12th Grade: 188
- **Waiting List:**
 - 9th Grade: 63
 - 10th Grade: 25

- 11th Grade: 15
- 12th Grade: 8

Mr. Jemison noted that current enrollment exceeds the budget projections. While the school continues to accept applicants, priority is now being given to upperclassmen (10th–12th grades) due to the 9th-grade class surpassing its target capacity of 265 students.

B. Title II Funding Update – Mr. Jemison

Mr. Jemison announced that Title II funding will be reinstated to Discovery High School. Preliminary reviews have already begun to assess how these funds can be allocated effectively. Due to recent staffing changes, adjustments to the original funding plan will be necessary. The administration will reevaluate how to best utilize these funds to support school needs and enhance services as the school year progresses.

C. Personnel Action – Mr. Jemison

Mr. Jemison reported that Discovery High School had one personnel action requiring board approval: the termination of an employee.

Main motion: Moved by John Taylor to approve the personnel action as presented. Charlotte Butler seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the governing board.

III. Old Business

A. Transportation Update – Mr. Warren

Mr. Warren provided an update on the transportation system, noting that all Discovery Schools buses are equipped with GPS tracking. While the parent application is not yet operational, the system allows administration to monitor bus locations in real-time. This data will be used to optimize routes and address any logistical issues as they arise. Implementation is nearly complete, and the parent app is expected to be available soon.

B. Teacher Salary Allocation (TSA) Update – Mr. Warren

Mr. Warren reported that Discovery Schools has not yet received updated information regarding state teacher salary increases. Additional details are expected in September 2025. Once information is received, Discovery Schools will develop a plan to implement salary increases for teachers.

Mr. Warren proposed that, unlike previous years where increases were distributed in multiple installments, the board consider implementing the increase as a single retroactive payment at the end of the semester or year to simplify administration and ensure clarity for staff.

C. Governing Board Fingerprint Update – Mrs. Daley and Ms. Sims

Chairperson Daley confirmed that all governing board members have completed the required fingerprinting. All members present verified their compliance. Secretary Sims confirmed that all members are cleared in the clearinghouse system and are compliant with state requirements for service on the governing board.

IV. New Business

A. Audit Update – Mr. Warren

Mr. Warren reported that the annual audit is currently in progress. All requested information has been provided to the auditors. The audit team is now working to obtain necessary information from the previous auditors and coordinating with Building Hope to finalize remaining components.

Mr. Warren distributed a Related Party Questionnaire to all board members (included in meeting packets) and requested that each member complete one form to the best of their ability. The questionnaire covers both schools in the Discovery system, and each member only needs to submit one form.

B. Accreditation Update – Mr. Jemison

Mr. Jemison announced that Discovery High School has received official accreditation certification. The school is now fully accredited for the next five years.

C. Cambridge Program Update – Mr. Jemison

Mr. Jemison provided an update on the potential implementation of the Cambridge program at Discovery High School. He highlighted both the educational benefits and financial considerations:

- **Benefits:** Students earning a Cambridge diploma would be guaranteed a Bright Futures Scholarship. The program allows students to retake assessments multiple times, unlike AP programs.
- **Costs:** The program requires an annual fee of approximately \$11,000, an initial setup fee of \$3,500, and additional costs for student exams.

Mr. Jemison stated that the school has begun the application process but emphasized the need for careful budget analysis before full implementation.

Chairperson Daley called for a consensus from the board to support further research and pursuit of the Cambridge program. The board unanimously expressed support for Mr. Jemison to continue exploring the program implementation, with the understanding that final approval would be contingent upon a detailed budget analysis and funding plan.

D. Health Insurance Update – Mr. Warren

Mr. Warren reported that the insurance committee voted to transition from UnitedHealthcare back to Florida Blue, responding to teacher preferences. The new three-tier plan structure includes:

- **Tier 1:** A no-cost option for teachers providing equivalent coverage to current plans
- **Tier 2:** An approximately \$30 option offering lower deductibles and co-pays
- **Tier 3:** An approximately \$40 option providing enhanced coverage benefits

The committee expressed satisfaction with the options presented by Kevin Mullen. Open enrollment will begin with a meeting on Friday (early release day), with projected savings exceeding \$100,000.

Chairperson Daley commended the process, noting satisfaction that teacher feedback was incorporated into the final decision.

E. Legal Update – Mr. Warren

Mr. Warren provided an update on the ongoing legal matter regarding a bus accident that occurred in November 2024. He reported that a request for the police report has been submitted to the Auburndale Police Department but has not yet been received. Mr. Warren indicated that the report would provide much clearer information about the incident once obtained.

VI. Stakeholder Report

A. DHS Teacher of the Year – Mrs. Daley

Chairperson Daley welcomed Mr. Adam Phelps, Discovery High School's Teacher of the Year, who teaches English. The board recognized and congratulated Mr. Phelps for his outstanding contributions to the school community.

B. Resignation of Terry Gier – Mrs. Daley

Chairperson Daley read a resignation letter from Board Member Terry Gier into the record. In the letter, Ms. Gier apologized for his recent silence and lack of communication, explaining that she had underestimated the difficulty of balancing board commitments with his responsibilities at Life Skills Academy. She formally resigned from the board but offered to remain available for a transitional period to vote on essential business or sign time-sensitive items until a replacement is found.

Main motion: Moved by Charlotte Butler to accept Ms. Gier's resignation. Doretha Tillman seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

VII. Board Member Reports

1. Bond Holder Update – Mrs. Daley

Chairperson Daley reported that the bondholders have transitioned from monthly to quarterly meetings, indicating their increased comfort with the school's financial position. The simplified meeting structure reflects their satisfaction with the school's progress and stability.

2. Athletics Update – Mrs. Daley

Chairperson Daley commended the high school administration for implementing a cashless ticketing app for athletic events. She noted her positive experience at a recent volleyball game where the system provided convenience and reduced cash handling. The board expressed appreciation for this modernization effort.

VIII. Treasurer's Report – Mr. Warren and Mr. Gordon Crozier

Mr. Warren introduced Mr. Gordon Crozier, CFO from Building Hope, to the board. Mr. Crozier presented a comprehensive financial update:

A. Financial Statement Review

- Conducted a detailed line-item analysis of current financial statements.
- Estimates that numbers are approximately 90% accurate but will require audit adjustments.
- Once adjustments are complete, the June 30 financial picture will be finalized.

B. Budget Status

- Current budgets align with projections discussed with Mr. Jemison and Mr. Warren.
- July is atypical due to the school year not yet starting; August payroll will provide a full cycle including part-time and hourly staff.
- Payroll, the largest budget item, has been reconciled with ADP registers and requires minor adjustments over the next one to two pay periods.

C. Compliance and Structure

- Financial reporting remains partially combined; further review of bond documents is needed to determine optimal reporting strategy.
- The structure is not overly complex, but intercompany transactions require careful management to optimize cash flow and provide clear consolidated and school-level financial pictures.

D. Financial Health Metrics

- **High School:** Debt service coverage ratio of 0.64 with 4 days cash on hand.

- **Combined (DHS/DALA):** Debt service coverage ratio of 0.83 with 25 days cash on hand.

E. Forward-Looking Strategies

- Focus on aggressive financial management to improve ratios and compliance.
- Implement monthly variance analysis and forecasting:
 - Use actuals for elapsed months (e.g., July) and budget for remaining months.
 - Adjust for timing differences (e.g., capital outlay received in January/February, grant reimbursements).
- Aim to deliver financial statements within two weeks of month-end closing.

F. Reporting and Oversight

- Provide detailed financial data to Mr. Warren and Mr. Jemison for daily management.
- Offer summarized reports to the board as needed.
- Ensure timely and accurate information to support proactive decision-making.

G. Funding and Cash Flow

- Monitoring charter capital outlay (~\$90,000) for the high school.
- Assessing Polk County funding nuances to anticipate timing differences (e.g., Title I fund disbursement delays).
- Current cash balances are sufficient to meet obligations, though inter-school transfers may be necessary.

Mr. Crozier concluded that the school is headed in the right direction with adequate resources and a clear plan for financial management.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:59 AM by Chairperson Daley.

Respectfully submitted,

Tania Sims

Secretary, Discovery High School Governing Board

Next Meeting: Oct 21, 2025
Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred Media
Center at 9:15 A.M.