

**DISCOVERY SCHOOLS GOVERNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Type:** Combined Regular Monthly Meeting of the Governing Board

**Date:** Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Time:** 9:15 AM to 11:15 AM

**Location:** Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred

**Presiding Officer:** Nancy Daley, Chairperson

**Minutes Prepared By:** Tania Sims, Secretary

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The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Discovery Schools 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 (via zoom)
- Darryl Jemison, Principal
- Stephen Frabotta, Principal
- Beth Fontaine, Assistant Principal
- Sandy Altamirano, Teacher of the Year

**I. Approval of Previous Minutes**

**Main motion:** Moved by Doretha Tillman to approve Combined Discovery Schools minutes from the January 20, 2026, meeting as written. Charlotte Butler seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**II. Treasurer's Report – Mr. Gordon Crozier**

Mr. Gordon Crozier, CFO from Building Hope, presented the financial overview for Discovery Schools via Zoom. The presentation focused on actual results through December and projected activity through June.

**Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA):**

- Revenue adjustments reflect the correction of a \$500,000 double-count of millage in the original budget. This has been carried through to expense projections.
- Stephen Frabotta has managed expenses by reducing salary forecasts and other budgeted line items to help offset the revenue adjustment.

**Board Approved**  
**3/24/26**  
Date

- Food service revenue is running \$400,000 over budget. Mr. Crozier recommended a deeper analysis of food service expenses, noting that approximately \$167,000 in staff salary allocations will need to be assigned to this area to align with federal program requirements.
- Transportation expenses are higher than budgeted due to a revised allocation method, using actual Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) transportation payments received by the high school to offset DALA's transportation costs.
- Instructional expenses (primarily salaries and group insurance) are \$363,000 under budget.
- Computer hardware, which was budgeted but has no expenses coded to it, should be addressed in a future capital budget.
- Despite the \$500,000 revenue inflation, the school is projected to end the year close to its original budget from a cash basis perspective.

#### **Discovery High School (DHS):**

- Revenue is under budget by approximately \$500,000, partially due to the same double-counted millage issue identified at DALA.
- Student enrollment is 886 students, lower than projected. However, this decrease was offset by:
  - An increase in the property tax-driven rate portion of FEFP calculations
  - A doubling of students classified as career education, which provides 11% higher funding per student compared to traditional students
- The school received its first local capital improvement revenue of just over \$100,000, a new funding stream resulting from increased property values and new development in Polk County.
- Food service revenue is \$73,000 over budget. Similar to DALA, expenses need to be properly allocated to this program.
- School age fees, internal funds (athletics, clubs), and class fees are collectively tracking approximately \$99,000 above budget.
- From a cash perspective, DHS is projected to lose approximately \$30,000–\$40,000 for the year. The school is expected to face a cash shortfall of close to \$500,000 in June, as operating expenses continue while no FEFP payment is received until mid-July.

### **III. Principal's Report**

#### **A. Personnel Action Reports:**

- **Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA):** Mr. Stephen Frabotta reported that there were no personnel actions requiring board approval.
- **Discovery High School (DHS):** Mr. Darryl Jemison reported that there were no personnel actions requiring board approval.

#### **B. Enrollment Update**

- **Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA) – Mr. Frabotta reported:**
  - 6th Grade: 356 students (target: 360)
  - 7th Grade: 337 students
  - 8th Grade: 326 students
  - **Total DALA Enrollment:** 1,021 students.
- **Discovery High School (DHS) – Mr. Jemison reported:**
  - Current Enrollment: 879 total students

## IV. Old Business

### A. Open Enrollment

#### **Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred – Stephen Frabotta**

Mr. Frabotta reported that DALA has received **560 applications** across all grade levels during the current open enrollment period. This represents a **25% increase** compared to the same time last year.

- He noted that this is the first time the school has received enough sixth-grade applications at this stage to fill the available seats for that grade level.
- He emphasized that the school will continue to accept and promote applications, noting that last year's total reached 800–900 applications by July. The board acknowledged the positive trend and effective promotion efforts.

#### **Discovery High School – Darryl Jemison**

Mr. Jemison reported on career programs, student services, and open enrollment:

- **Academics & Programs:** Career education program enrollment has doubled, contributing to both academic opportunities and increased funding. Athletic programs are concluding successful winter seasons. The counseling department is actively supporting seniors with college applications and scholarship opportunities. Spring testing preparations are underway.
- **Open Enrollment Update:** Mr. Jemison shared that DHS had approximately **300 applications** as of the previous day. As of the morning of the meeting, that number had increased to **360 applications**.
  - He confirmed that the school is continuing to promote and accept applications, with expectations to reach last year's final total of approximately 550 applications as the enrollment period continues.

### B. Marketing

Following the enrollment updates, the Board engaged in a discussion regarding marketing strategies, initiated by an observation about the school's external marquee.

- **Marquee Messaging:** It was noted that the marquee currently displays only the date and time. The Board discussed the opportunity to use this visible tool for ongoing recruitment messaging, such as "Now Enrolling for DALA & DHS" or "Tours Available," even outside of the formal open enrollment window.
- **Perception Management:** The Board discussed the importance of marketing in shaping public perception. It was noted that some families may perceive charter schools as exclusive or difficult to access. Marketing efforts should aim to reduce that perception by welcoming inquiries and tours.
- **Next Steps:** The Board agreed that messaging should be welcoming and informative. No formal action was taken, but the principals were encouraged to consider marquee updates and other low-cost marketing tools to maintain visibility and community engagement.

## V. New Business

### **A. Potential New Board Members**

Mrs. Daley announced that several candidates have expressed interest in joining the Governing Board.

- **Candidates in Attendance:** Aaron Nangle and Terrence Pereira were present at the meeting as observers.
- **Candidate Not in Attendance:** Sherry Wells was unable to attend but has accepted the invitation to begin the onboarding process.
- **Onboarding Process:** Candidates will complete the required ethics training and background checks prior to the next meeting. Mrs. Daley expressed optimism that the new members would be seated and eligible to vote by the March meeting.
- **Board Resource Packet:** It was announced that Discovery Schools is compiling a resource packet for all board members. The packet will include the charter and documentation of recent amendments, intended to serve as a helpful reference and maintain continuity from year to year.

## VI. Stakeholder Report

### **A. Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA) Teacher of the Year – Ms. Sandy Altamirano**

Ms. Altamirano provided updates on school activities and athletic achievements:

- **Athletics:**
  - Flag football season has officially started, with the first two games scheduled for the upcoming week.
  - Girls' soccer will begin at the end of the month.
- **Fine Arts:**
  - The school held a concert on Friday, February 13, which was a huge success with strong community attendance.
- **Marketing & School Pride:**
  - Ms. Altamirano reported that she and Mr. Frabotta have been working on a banner to commemorate **DALA volleyball's first JV championship**.
  - They are currently obtaining parent approvals to include player names on the banner.
  - Once completed, the banner will be displayed outside the school to promote athletic success and generate community awareness of the school's achievements.

Mr. Frabotta noted that Mrs. Schenkenberg was unable to attend the meeting due to a field experience this week.

- **Sixth Grade Field Experience:** Sixth-grade students are attending BizTown in Tampa, sponsored by Junior Achievement. This program provides students with a hands-on financial literacy and citizenship experience.
- **Seventh Grade Field Experience:** Next week, seventh-grade students will participate in the Finance Arc program, also through Junior Achievement, which extends financial literacy and citizenship learning.

## **B. Discovery High School (DHS) Teacher of the Year – Mr. Adam Phelps**

Mr. Phelps provided a brief update on school activities:

- **Spartan for a Cure:** In response to an inquiry from the Board, Mr. Phelps noted that a date has not yet been set for the annual Spartan for a Cure event.

Mr. Jemison shared upcoming school-related activities for Discovery High School:

- **College Visit:** Students will have the opportunity to tour Bethune-Cookman University in March as part of ongoing efforts to expose students to college campuses and post-secondary opportunities.

## **VII. Board Member Report**

Mrs. Daley shared exciting news regarding Discovery High School basketball achievements:

- **Coaching Recognition:** Coach Sirmons and Coach Beauvil have been named District Six Coach of the Year.
- **Student Recognition:** Student athlete Shania Patterson has been named District Six Player of the Year.
- **Media Outreach:** Mrs. Daley informed the Board that she plans to submit this information to the Winter Haven Sun and the Lakeland Ledger for potential articles, noting that the basketball achievements are timely given the high level of community interest in the sport.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 AM by Chairperson Daley.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Tania Sims**

Secretary, Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred Governing Board

**Next Meeting: March 24, 2026**  
Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred Media  
Center after the Discovery High School  
Meeting at 9:15 A.M.