

DISCOVERY SCHOOLS GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Type: Combined Regular Monthly Meeting of the Governing Board

Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM to 10:55 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 Schools Governing Board was called to order at 9:30 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
- Aaron Nangle, Community Member
- Sherry Wells, 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
- Mel Green

I. Approval of Previous Minutes

Main motion: Moved by Aaron Nangle to approve Combined Discovery Schools minutes from the March 24, 2026, meeting as written. Doretha Tillman 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 the following key points:

- **General Operations:** At the school level, both revenues and expenses are tracking as projected throughout the year, with all line items running on target.
- **School Lunch Program:** The only revenue item requiring close attention is the school lunch program. Mr. Crozier noted that reimbursements have not yet been fully recorded. The finance team will be diligent in submitting all outstanding reimbursement requests to ensure they are captured before year-end closing. Additionally, administrative expenses will be allocated at the reporting level to free up excess cash within the food service account.
- **Combined Dashboard & Debt Compliance:** Mr. Crozier highlighted a newly created combined financial summary sheet (developed in collaboration with President Kevin

Warren) that encapsulates the school's financial trends. This dashboard has been well-received by the bondholders.

- **Days-Cash & Forbearance Agreement:** The analysis shows that days-cash drops at the end of the fiscal year due to the absence of a June state payment, which is when compliance calculations are typically performed. However, when including the **\$700,000** held with the trustee (proceeds from a land sale and part of the forbearance agreement), the school's cash-on-hand meets the loan covenant requirements. Based on this data, Nuveen and other bondholders have expressed comfort with the school's financial trajectory. Mr. Crozier reported that they are on requesting to **close out the forbearance agreement** in the near future.
- **Future Outlook:** The current days-cash is approximately 45 days. Mr. Crozier projected that by continuing current fiscal practices, this should grow to 50–60 days during the next school year, with the ultimate target of reaching 90 days cash-on-hand.

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.

Motion: To approve the Principal's Report as presented.

Moved by: Doretha Tillman

Seconded by: Aaron Nangle

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

B. Enrollment Update

- **Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA)** – Mr. Frabotta reported:
 - 6th Grade: 356 students (target: 360)
 - 7th Grade: 334 students
 - 8th Grade: 324 students
 - **Total DALA Enrollment: 1,014 students**
- **Discovery High School (DHS)** – Mr. Jemison reported:
 - 9th Grade: 268 students
 - 10th Grade: 213 students
 - 11th Grade: 192 students
 - 12th Grade: 188 students
 - **Total DHS Enrollment: 861 students**
- **Combined District-Wide Enrollment (DALA + DHS): 1,875 students**

IV. Old Business

A. Applications Update

- **Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA)** – Mr. Stephen Frabotta reported:

The school has just completed the second round of acceptances. Currently, there are **306 commitments** for 6th grade for the 2026–2027 school year. Projecting forward, with the current 6th grade becoming 7th grade and current 7th grade becoming 8th grade, combined with the 6th grade enrollment goals, DALA is looking to set total enrollment at approximately **1,040 to 1,045 students** for the upcoming school year. This provides some leeway for the typical summer fluctuations of students coming and going.

- **Discovery High School (DHS)** – Mr. Darryl Jemison reported:
Total applications to date are at **466**, broken down as follows:
 - 9th Grade: 375 applications (planning to accept approximately 325, with a target of 300 enrolling)
 - 10th Grade: 50 applications
 - 11th Grade: 20 applications
 - 12th Grade: 17 applications

For 11th and 12th grades, the school plans to accept all applicants given the low numbers, though actual enrollment will depend on whether students show up. Projected total enrollment for DHS to start the school year is approximately **940 to 950 students**.

B. 26/27 School Calendars

Chairperson Nancy Daley introduced the item, noting that significant discussion had occurred at the previous meeting. The administrative team collaborated extensively to achieve consistency between the two school calendars. While the calendars are not consistent with the Polk County School District, the schools have the flexibility to deviate, and the board's primary concern was alignment between the two Discovery campuses.

Mr. Stephen Frabotta provided additional context, explaining that a summary of key deviations between the two calendars was included for the board's reference. The calendars were developed with the following considerations:

- **Operational and Funding Compliance:** Scheduling and funding reviews have been completed with no anticipated issues. The calendars will not affect FTE or FEFP calculations.
- **Instructional Hours:** Total instructional hours remain the same as the previous year and meet all statutory requirements for student minutes.
- **Staff and Student Needs:** As a charter school, the administration has the opportunity to tailor the calendar to better meet the needs of staff and students. Key drivers for the proposed changes included:
 - Low attendance rates on early release days, which the calendar aims to reduce.
 - Addressing student and teacher burnout by incorporating small, strategic mini-breaks during high-stress periods throughout the school year.
 - Teacher feedback regarding concerns with prior calendars.

Chairperson Daley noted that the only significant difference between the two campuses is that Discovery High School has two more early release days than Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred.

Mr. Darryl Jemison added that the administrative team worked diligently to eliminate most differences and create as consistent a calendar as possible across both schools for the benefit of all students and stakeholders.

Chairperson Daley requested that, given this is the first year with such significant deviations from the district calendar, the administration track student participation on days when Discovery Schools are open while the district is closed, or when the schools return earlier or later than the district. This data would help determine if family conflicts with district-calendar siblings impact attendance and provide a basis for comparison for future calendar planning.

Motion: To approve the 2026–2027 school calendars as presented.

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: Doretha Tillman

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

V. New Business

A. Projected FTE for 2026–2027 School Year

Mr. Stephen Frabotta presented the projected FTE form included in the board packets. He noted that the number had been updated from the agenda version to **1,035** for Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred, which will serve as the basis for budget development for the upcoming school year. The projected FTE is due to be submitted by the end of May. The school is hoping to achieve actual enrollment around **1,040 to 1,042** to provide some leeway.

Mr. Darryl Jemison reported that Discovery High School's projected FTE is **925**, with the school shooting to achieve actual enrollment between **940 and 950** students.

Motion: To approve the projected FTE numbers for the 2026–2027 school year as presented (DALA: 1,030; DHS: 925).

Moved by: Doretha Tillman

Seconded by: Aaron Nangle

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

B. Single Federal Audits

Chairperson Nancy Daley introduced the item, noting that the single federal audit reports were included in the board packets, and there were some findings to discuss. She turned the floor over to President Kevin Warren for explanation.

Mr. Warren provided a detailed overview of the audit results for both campuses:

Discovery High School (ESSER Audit):

- The audit report included a note confirming that, in the auditor's opinion, the school has complied in all material respects.
- The findings section (page 6) showed no material weaknesses, no significant deficiencies, and no noncompliance. **The high school audit is clean.**
- The audit was qualified as "low risk," but the "no" designation at the bottom of page 6 reflects that the school's single audit was turned in late in 2023, preventing the "yes" designation.
- Questionable costs and other issues were none.
- Mr. Warren noted that single federal audits are only required when federal expenses exceed \$750,000. Given the high school's ESSER funding has concluded, the high school will likely not require another single audit for some time.

Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (National School Lunch Program Audit):

- The audit report similarly confirmed that, in the auditor's opinion, the school has complied in all material respects.
- The findings section (page 6) showed no material weaknesses, no significant deficiencies, and no noncompliance material to financial statements.
- **One finding was identified:** The food service account balance exceeded the allowable threshold under National School Lunch Program rules. The program requires that account balances not exceed three months of monthly revenues. If the balance exceeds this threshold for three consecutive months, the school must obtain a waiver from the state. This waiver was not obtained.

- Mr. Warren noted that former CFO George had previously discussed the need to spend down the food service funds, but no plan was developed before his departure in November, resulting in the audit finding.

Required Action Plan:

To address the finding, the school must develop an **action plan** that includes:

- The current amount in the food service account.
- A detailed plan for spending the funds on items directly related to the National School Lunch Program (e.g., kitchen equipment).
- Safeguards to ensure this situation does not recur. These safeguards are now in place through Charter ACE, with daily monitoring of bank account balances to ensure the threshold is not approached. If the balance nears or exceeds the threshold, a spending plan will be promptly developed.

Mr. Warren noted that the action plan included in the audit packet was prepared in consultation with the auditors and coincides with a recent National School Lunch Program audit by the state.

Motion: To accept the Single Federal Audit reports for Discovery High School and Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred as presented, and to approve the recommended action plan to address the food service account finding.

Moved by: Doretha Tillman

Seconded by: Aaron Nangle

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Motion: To approve the Discovery High School ESSER.

Moved by: John Taylor

Seconded by: Aaron Nangle

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

C. Contracts

1. Custodial (Enterprise) DALA & DHS

Chairperson Daley introduced the janitorial maintenance agreement for renewal. She noted that the same company is currently providing services for both schools, and the administration is recommending renewal. She asked the principals for affirmation of service quality.

Mr. Stephen Frabotta confirmed that the schools have been working with the vendor to ensure expectations are being met. He noted that the schools will continue the practice of seeking competitive quotes from other companies in the future, potentially starting the process earlier, to ensure the schools are maximizing value. However, he confirmed satisfaction with the current vendor.

Chairperson Daley noted that the contract terms are the same as the previous year, with no increase in cost.

Motion: To approve the janitorial maintenance agreement with Enterprise Services for both Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred and Discovery High School.

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: Charlotte Butler

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

2. Lawn (Enterprise) DALA - Vote

Mr. Stephen Frabotta presented the lawn maintenance contract for Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred. He noted that both schools had historically used Enterprise, and DALA chose to remain with them last year when the high school transitioned to a different vendor. The contracts are comparable to prior years.

Mr. Frabotta also noted that a third contract will be presented at the June meeting to address maintenance of the marsh area around the marquee. This area had previously become overgrown and was recently cleared by SwiftMudge. A separate contract is required for this work due to ecological requirements and the specialized nature of the maintenance. The new contract will ensure the area does not become overgrown again.

Mr. Kevin Warren added that grounds maintenance at the high school is handled by a different vendor (M and J), and that contract will be brought to the board for approval at the June meeting.

Motion: To approve the lawn maintenance contract with Enterprise Services for Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred.

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: Charlotte Butler

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. Financial (Building Hope) DALA & DHS

Chairperson Nancy Daley introduced the item, providing context for new board members regarding the school's financial services history. Approximately two years ago, the schools transitioned from a separate, in-house accountant to contracting with Building Hope for back-office financial services. While there were initial glitches during the transition, Building Hope has since cleaned up significant prior issues. Their pricing is competitive compared to alternatives such as Charter Impact, which is considerably more expensive. Chairperson Daley expressed her preference to continue with Building Hope for another year, noting that the first year was largely a transitional cleanup period. She suggested that if further issues arise, the board could revisit the decision to explore other options, including hiring a personal CPA or another service provider.

Ms. Doretha Tillman expressed support for continuing with Building Hope, noting that they have helped increase transparency among administrators and have worked diligently to organize the school's financial records.

Chairperson Daley then sought input from the principals and finance staff.

Mr. Stephen Frabotta and Mr. Darryl Jemison both expressed agreement with proceeding with Building Hope.

Ms. Mel Green raised several operational concerns:

- **Lack of Daily Visibility:** The school cannot see a full financial picture on a day-to-day basis. The only comprehensive view available is Gordon Crozier's report provided for board meetings.
- **QuickBooks Access:** Ms. Green and Secretary Tania Sims currently do not have access to QuickBooks, limiting their ability to track finances in real time.
- **Internal Accounts Management:** Tracking internal accounts (e.g., sports teams, clubs) is currently managed through Google spreadsheets, which is not ideal. Ms. Green suggested two potential solutions:

1. Each school obtains its own QuickBooks license with direct access, allowing entries to be recorded directly and providing full visibility into both operating and internal accounts.
2. Alternatively, Building Hope could provide access to their QuickBooks system.

Ms. Sherry Wells summarized the discussion, noting that the core issue is the need for compatible accounting software that enables real-time reporting between the schools and Building Hope. She suggested that purchasing a QuickBooks license for internal use would address these concerns.

Ms. Tania Sims affirmed that while bills and payments are being processed on time without issues, the lack of QuickBooks access makes tracking internal accounts (field trips, sports, etc.) unnecessarily difficult.

Mr. Aaron Nangle raised a data ownership concern, emphasizing that if the school invests in QuickBooks, the license and data should remain under the school's control to prevent potential access issues if the relationship with Building Hope were to end.

Motion: To approve the renewal of the financial services contract with Building Hope, with the contingency that the contract be amended to include full QuickBooks access for school administrators (Mel Green and Tania Sims) and that the school retains ownership and control of the QuickBooks license and data.

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: Doretha Tillman

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Trujillo (Auditor) DALA & DHS - Vote

Mr. Kevin Warren presented the audit proposals, noting that three proposals were included in the board packets. He directed the board's attention to the first page of each proposal, specifically the "Audit Scope and Objectives" section, which indicates that the auditor will examine the combined financial statements.

Mr. Warren noted that pages one through five of the proposal outline the auditor's responsibilities, requirements, and testing procedures. The fee schedule for the audits is highlighted on page five.

Motion: To approve Garcia, Santa Maria, De Armas & Trujillo, PLLC as the auditor for both Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred and Discovery High School for the upcoming audit season.

Moved by: Doretha Tillman

Seconded by: Aaron Nangle

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

D. School Start Time Report DALA & DHS

Chairperson Nancy Daley introduced the item, providing context regarding recent legislative action requiring schools to change their start times. The public school district conducted community meetings on the matter, which were met with significant opposition from parents and community members. The legislation ultimately passed but included a provision allowing schools to request a waiver to maintain their current start times.

Chairperson Daley noted that a well-written compliance report was prepared for Discovery Schools, detailing why changing start times would create significant operational challenges, including:

- Elementary and middle school students sharing buses.
- Students arriving at school before teachers and staff, creating supervision issues.

- General disruption to families and students.

The report requests approval to maintain the school's current start times, which Chairperson Daley noted are better suited to the needs of students and families.

Motion: To approve the compliance report requesting to maintain the current school start times for both Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred and Discovery High School.

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: Doretha Tillman

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

VI. Stakeholder Report

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

Ms. Sandy Altamirano provided the following updates to the Board:

- **Field Trip – Ybor City:** The day after the previous board meeting, the Spanish Warren High School credit class went on a field trip to Ybor City. The Gunsmart family is part of the class textbook, *Viva La Florida*. The field trip was very successful. Students were able to bring food back to campus and invited Miss Betty for lunch to thank her for her services, as well as the principal.
- **Track and Field:** The track and field team competed last week, with the girls winning second place and the boys earning third place. It has been a very busy season, including two track meets in one week, but overall performance has been positive.
- **8th Grade Celebration:** Ms. Altamirano provided a heads-up that since the Board will not meet in May, the 8th-grade celebration committee has decided on a World Cup theme for the social event following the special lunch. The invitations have been finalized and will be sent to students, along with information about the Lake Eva event in the same envelope.
- **Voyager Night:** Ms. Altamirano noted that the new Voyager Night was very successful.

B. Teacher Representative Report – Mrs. Karie Schenkenberg

Mrs. Karie Schenkenberg provided the following updates to the Board:

- **Voyager Night:** The new Voyager Night was a success. It was a great opportunity to meet incoming students and their families. Students asked very good questions, including some from current 7th and 8th graders.
- **End-of-Year Celebrations:** The school is looking forward to welcoming parents on campus for end-of-year celebrations.
- **6th Grade Field Experiences:** Sixth grade is finishing up with field experiences this week.
- **End-of-Year Excitement:** The school is looking forward to getting the end-of-year excitement all started.

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

Mr. Adam Phelps provided the following updates to the Board:

- **End-of-Year Crunch:** The school is in the final stretch of the academic year with the usual end-of-year activities and responsibilities.
- **Prom:** Prom is scheduled for the following Saturday.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM by Chairperson Daley.

Respectfully submitted,

Tania Sims

Secretary, Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred Governing Board

Next Meeting: June 22, 2026

Discovery High School

Meeting at 9:30 A.M.