

DISCOVERY SCHOOLS GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Type: Combined Regular Monthly Meeting of the Governing Board

Date: Tuesday, July 22, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM

Location: Discovery High School

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
- John Taylor, Community Member
- Aaron Nangle, Community Member
- Sherry Wells, Community Member
- Tania Sims, Secretary

Board Members Absent:

- Charlotte Butler, Community Member
- Doretha Tillman, Community Member

Others in Attendance:

- Gordon Crozier, CFO from Building Hope (via zoom)
- Darryl Jemison, DHS Principal
- Stephen Frabotta, DALA Principal
- Erica Hudson, DHS Assistant Principal
- Beth Fontaine, DHS Assistant Principal
- Mel Green, DHS Finance
- Crystal Adams, Teacher of the Year 2026 – DALA
- Karie Schenkenberg

Housekeeping Items:

- The workshop scheduled immediately following the meeting was postponed and will be rescheduled for a time when all members are available, ideally after the August meeting.

I. 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:

- **June Financial Snapshot & Open Items:** Mr. Crozier noted that while the June financial reports have a couple of open items due to the fiscal year being only 22 days in, the numbers provided represent a good working snapshot. He clarified that lunch program deposits have

been made but are not yet reflected in the report, nor is the Blue Cross Blue Shield payment that has been sent to the charter. These two items largely offset each other in terms of revenue and expenditure.

- **Cash Position & Bond Ratio:** Mr. Crozier addressed the bond ratio, which has been a topic of discussion in previous meetings and calls with bondholders. He identified June as the "low watermark" for cash, attributed to the absence in FEFP (Florida Education Finance Program) payments. In June there was some confusion this year regarding the flow of funds through the bondholders, it was noted that even with \$700,000 in escrow money, the school is estimated to have 40 days of cash on hand. Based on current models and budgets, the school is projected to perform better than last year, with cash reserves continuing to grow throughout the year.
- **High School Funding & Payback:** The final paid count for the high school was confirmed at 875 students. Mr. Crozier noted a \$92,000 payback that will need to be addressed. While this did not occur in June on a cash basis, it will be recorded in the 2025-2026 books.
- **Transportation Expenses & Fleet Concerns:** A significant point of discussion was the age of the school's fleet. Mr. Crozier highlighted that transportation expenses in June were up approximately \$70,000, which he attributed to year-end repairs to prepare the fleet for the upcoming school year. This expense aligns with prior concerns raised by Stephen Frabotta and Kevin Warren regarding the aging fleet.
- **Potential Grant Funding for Buses:** Mr. Crozier mentioned that he is working with another school in Jacksonville that utilized a grant program to offset the cost of new buses. While that school ventured into electric vehicles (EVs)—which Mr. Crozier advised may not be suitable for the school's rural routes—he suggested exploring funding sources to subsidize lease payments or purchase new buses outright as a consideration for the next fiscal year.

II. Old Business

Main motion: Moved by Aaron Nangle to remove the June minutes from the agenda. Sherry Wells seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Main motion: Moved by Aaron Nangle to approve Combined Discovery Schools minutes from the April 22, 2026, meeting as written. John Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

III. New Business

A. Transportation Update

Mr. Kevin Warren introduced **Josh Griffis** as the new Transportation Coordinator for Discovery Schools.

Mr. Griffis introduced himself, sharing his background with Polk County since 2009 and his experience in transportation management. Key updates included:

- Implementing the "Bus Boss" program to improve route efficiency and student tracking
- Working on adding stops at Silver Lake and Gum Lake for student safety (hazardous walking routes due to lack of sidewalks)
- Adjusting routes to make student pickup/drop-off safer and more efficient

B. School Grades

DALA (Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred): Mr. Frabotta began by expressing immense pride in the teachers and students for their hard work and dedication throughout the school year. He noted that achieving an **"A" school grade** had been a goal set at the beginning of the academic year. While the team was confident in the improvement the students had shown, there was uncertainty about how everything would ultimately settle. He was pleased to announce that the school had successfully crossed the threshold to earn an "A" rating. Mr. Frabotta emphasized to the staff that the work truly begins now, as the school must focus on cementing its standing and maintaining that atmosphere of excellence in the years to come.

- **Comparative Data:** Mr. Frabotta presented a detailed breakdown comparing this year's school grade to the previous year's performance. He also provided comparative data against Polk County schools to illustrate the school's improvement and standing within the broader district context.

DHS (Discovery High School): Mr. Jemison reported that DHS received a **"C" school grade**. He noted that while the school improved in every graded area, math and lowest quartile learning gains remain significant areas of concern. He outlined corrective actions taken, including hiring full-time teachers for critical areas, adding full-time deans to provide instructional coaching, and shifting the daily schedule to allow for additional remediation time. Mr. Jemison also proudly announced a 100% graduation rate for the upcoming year, as all students have met their graduation requirements.

C. Proposed Budget 26-27 - DHS

Summary: Mr. Jemison presented the proposed budget for Discovery High School for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Key points included:

- Budget based on projected enrollment of 925 students (currently at 915+)
- Increase in general operating and instructional budgets due to hiring more certified teachers
- Net change in fund balance is limited but expected to improve over the multi-year transition
- Title I and Title II funding received; capital outlay amount pending

Motion: To approve the Discovery High School 2026-2027 budget.

Moved by: Sherry Wells

Seconded by: Aaron Nangle

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

D. Attendance Incentive

Mr. Frabotta presented a proposal to address high substitute teacher costs:

- Current budget includes approximately 40 guest teacher days per month at \$180/day, plus higher rates for long-term substitutes
- Proposed monthly attendance bonus: \$50 Target or Amazon gift card for employees with perfect attendance (no absences, late arrivals, or early departures)
- Goal: Reduce Kelly Services costs and redirect funds to employee incentives

Discussion points:

- Sherry Wells raised concerns about state statute requirements for gift cards as taxable income. She recommended verifying legal compliance before moving forward.
- Mrs. Green noted that in her previous experience, safety incentives were recorded as taxable income.
- Mrs. Fontaine expressed concerns about equity (teachers with young children vs. those without) and the potential for sick teachers to come to work for the incentive.

- Mrs. Wells suggested alternative incentives such as extra planning time or administrative support.
- Mrs. Daley noted that this should be a combined effort between both schools.

Action Item: Administration to:

1. Verify state statute compliance regarding gift cards and taxable income
2. Form a committee to develop comprehensive incentive program
3. Report back at the next meeting.

E. Contract Renewals

1. DHS ground maintenance contract renewal was deferred to the next meeting.
2. Workers' Compensation Insurance.

Presenter: Mr. Warren

- Workers' comp premium increased this year; insurance agent secured a lower bid at \$52,000
- Mr. Warren noted the premium increase and indicated other insurance renewals take effect October 1st

F. Disclosure of Relatives

A list of relatives employed by the schools was presented to the Board for review and disclosure.

- Board members acknowledged the list of relatives working at Discovery Academy and Discovery High School
- Chairperson Daley reiterated her recusal statement regarding her relatives.

G. Conflict of Interest and Disclosure of Relatives

1. Conflict of Interest Policy

Discussion Summary:

- Board members reviewed and signed the three-page Conflict of Interest Policy.
- The policy was presented for formal approval by the Board.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure:

Mrs. Daley, Chairperson stated:

"I am subject to recusal as to any matter relating to the employment promotion, assignment, or advancement of my relative, and have taken no action to advocate for such with any charter school personnel."

Motion: To approve the Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: Sherry Wells

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

2. Voting Conflict Form 8B

Discussion Summary:

- Form 8B (Voting Recusal Form) was presented for approval
- This form is to be used when a board member needs to abstain from voting due to a conflict of interest
- The form must be completed at the time of any recusal

Motion: To approve the Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

Moved by: Sherryl Wells

Seconded by: John Taylor

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. Employee Conflict of Interest/Nepotism Disclosure Form

Discussion Summary:

- The Employee Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Disclosure Statement was presented for approval
- This form is to be completed by administrators and supervisory personnel who have relatives employed by the schools
- The form will be maintained in school records (not Board records)

Motion: To approve the Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

Moved by: Sherry Wells

Seconded by: Aaron Nangle

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

IV. Principal's Report

2. Discovery High School - Personnel

Resignations and New Hires:

- All positions have been filled
- Several teachers will start as they work toward certification (noted on the list)
- DHS is currently fully staffed

Motion: By Mr. Nangle, SECOND by Mrs. Wells and Mr. Taylor, to approve DHS Personnel (resignations and new hires).

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Recusal: Mrs. Daley recused herself from voting as she has a relative being hired at the high school.

Motion: MOTION by Mr. Nangle, SECOND by Mrs. Wells, to approve the out-of-field assignments for DHS.

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

2. Discovery Academy - Personnel

Resignations and New Hires:

- Multiple personnel moves including in-house shifts and transfers

- Two teachers in the tech program
- Several teachers are currently teaching in out-of-field assignments (content or ESOL)
- All open positions have been filled

Motion: to approve DALA Personnel (resignations and new hires).

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: John Taylor

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Motion: To approve the out-of-field assignments for DALA.

Moved by: Aaron Nangle

Seconded by: John Taylor

Vote: The motion passed by unanimous vote.

B. Enrollment Update

Discovery High School:

- Current enrollment: 279 (9th), 260 (10th), 201 (11th), 195 (12th) = 935
- Committed but pending paperwork: 10 (9th), 2 (10th), 2 (11th), 2 (12th)
- Projected enrollment: 951

Discovery Academy:

- 6th grade: 347
- 7th grade: 356
- 8th grade: 336
- In Focus: 1,039 (approximately 1,050 expected)

V. Stakeholder Report

Mrs. Schekenberg:

- Teachers are preparing classrooms and planning for the school year.
- Positive community response to the "A" grade on social media.

Ms. Altamirano:

- Classroom set up for the year.
- Supports the attendance incentive but will wait for further details.

Mrs. Hudson:

- Summer sports programs active: football practicing, volleyball conditioning, cheer team preparing
- Seniors painting parking spots
- Fall Fest planned for October 23
- EC program transitioned to new teacher (Mr. Harman)
- Summer boot camps successful: 21 students passed math requirements, 7 passed reading

AI Discussion:

- Mrs. Wells recommended teachers incorporate in-class components to projects to combat AI-generated work

- Mrs. Fountain noted grade weighting (assessments more heavily weighted) helps address cheating
- Mr. Nangle raised concerns about students finding ways around restrictions; the board discussed strategies including requiring students to show work and explain reasoning

VI. Board Member Report

- Gas company is working toward a closing date on the corner property
- The company requested early access for surveying and prep work
- Mrs. Daley accepted a \$2,000 payment for early access (payment pending)

VII. 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: August 25, 2026

Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred

Meeting at 9:30 A.M.