

DISCOVERY SCHOOLS GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Type: Combined Regular Monthly Meeting of the Governing Board

Date: Tuesday, September 22, 2026

Time: 9:30 AM to 10:37 AM

Location: Discovery High School

Presiding Officer: Kevin Warren, President/Treasurer

Minutes Prepared By: Tania Sims, Secretary

Board Members Present:

- Kevin Warren, President/Treasurer
- 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:

- Nancy Daley, Chairperson/Community Member

Others in Attendance:

- Gordon Crozier, CFO from Building Hope (via zoom)
- Darryl Jemison, DHS Principal
- Stephen Frabotta, DALA Principal
- Erica Hudson, DHS Assistance Principal
- Beth Fontaine, DHS Assistance Principal
- Alex Trujillo of the Audit Team (via Zoom)

I. Call to Order & Welcome

Kevin Warren, President/Treasurer, called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and welcomed all board members and attendees.

Mr. Warren excused Nancy Daley, Chairperson/Community Member, from the meeting.

II. Old Business

- **Approval of June Minutes:**
 - **Motion:** Aaron Nangle moved to approve the August minutes as presented.
 - **Second:** Doretha Tillman
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously.
- **Approval of July Minutes:**
 - **Motion:** Aaron Nangle moved to approve the August Workshop minutes as presented.
 - **Second:** John Taylor
 - **Vote:** Passed unanimously.

Board Approved
10/29/26
Date

III. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Gordon Crozier, CFO from Building Hope, presented the financial overview for Discovery Schools via Zoom. The presentation focused on the following key points:

Bond Coverage & Cash Position

- Combined debt service coverage ratio is **1.14**.
- Days cash on hand is **41 days**, up approximately **1.2 days**, though still slightly below the forecasted target. The low point was attributed to the lack of FEFP funding in June, with cash expected to build through the year toward a **45-day** goal by year-end.

FY27 Forecast

- July and August are transitional months; the forecast stabilizes after September.
- The school is projected to be **within budget**, with a full-year change in fund balance of **over \$400,000**.
- Both schools are projected to be **cash positive** for the year.
- A more thorough forecast will be completed after September and the audit.

Accounting Notes

- Forecasts are on a **cash basis**. The trustee cash amount (just below \$700,000) is included but not yet on the books—the **actual closing statement** is needed to record the transaction.
- Intercompany accounts between the two schools were noted, and ways to reconcile and will continue to be monitored.

Enrollment & Fleet

- Enrollment is **right on par**, insulating Discovery from the statewide declining enrollment trend due to its grade structure, program offerings, and transportation services.
- **Fleet age** is a concern; refreshing the fleet through grants, financing, and operating cash will be a goal for the coming year.

IV. New Business

Annual Audit

Mr. Warren introduced Alex Trujillo of the Audit Team (via Zoom) to present the final audit. Board members received a draft audit a few days before the meeting.

Audit Status

Mr. Trujillo reported the audit is in its **final stages**. He spoke with Mr. Frabotta the previous day, and some budget changes will be made—but **no changes to the hard numbers are expected**. Only the amended budgets and related schedules will be updated. The final audit will be sent **no later than Friday**.

Key Changes in the Financials

Mr. Trujillo explained that GASB made significant changes to governmental financial reporting, including:

- **Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A)**: A new summary section (pages 5–9) explaining the year's results and major changes for non-accounting readers.
- **Budgetary Comparison Schedules**: Now require the original budget, final budget, actuals, and **explanations of significant differences** (pages 32–35). These cover the General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and Debt Service Fund.

DALA Financial Highlights

- **Revenue:** Decreased approximately **\$570,000**, mainly due to the loss of ESSER funds.
- **Expenses:** Decreased approximately **\$957,000****, largely due to a favorable FRS/net pension adjustment of about ****\$220,000** (compared to an unfavorable \$770,000 adjustment last year). This is outside the school's control and does not affect cash.
- **Gain on Sale of Land:** Approximately ****\$371,000**** from the sale of property for \$688,800.
- **Bottom Line:** A **\$385,000 positive change in net position** compared to last year. Even excluding the land sale gain, there was no deficit.
- **Net Position Deficit:** Approximately ****\$4.3 million****, largely due to GASB pension accounting (~\$6.5 million). Excluding pension, net position would be approximately **positive \$2.2 million**.
- **Restricted Net Position:**
 - Food Service surplus decreased from over \$1 million to approximately ****\$869,000**** (planned spending).
 - Debt Service (Bond): approximately **\$1.6 million**, all in cash.

High School Financial Highlights

- **Revenue:** Very similar to last year.
- **Expenses:** Decreased approximately **\$300,000**.
- **Change in Position:** Positive **\$156,000**.
- The school ended the year with a deficit on a fund balance and net position basis, partly due to bond and right-of-use accounting. The improved bottom line is a positive sign going forward.

Bond Compliance

- **Debt Service Coverage:** Meeting the requirement.
- **Days Cash on Hand:** Similar to last year, slightly less, due to the June FEFP payment not being received. This is a timing issue with limited remedy.

Board Discussion

- A board member asked when the final audit would be ready. Mr. Trujillo confirmed **no later than Friday**.
- No additional questions were raised. Mr. Warren thanked Mr. Trujillo, and the board will follow up with any specifics.

Approval of Discovery Academy Draft Audit

- **Motion:** Sherry Wells moved to approve the Discovery Academy final audit and financial statements as presented, with the draft and the amended budget corrections to be added to the report.
- **Second:** Doretha Tillman
- **Vote:** Passed unanimously.

Approval of Discovery High School Draft Audit

- **Motion:** Aaron Nangle moved to approve the Discovery High School final audit and financial statements as presented, with the draft and the amended budget corrections to be added to the report.
- **Second:** Doretha Tillman
- **Vote:** Passed unanimously.

Salary Increase Allocation (SIA)

Mr. Warren presented the SIA plan for approval.

- Funds directed to **classroom teachers with 10+ years'** experience, then instructional personnel.
- Model based on **Polk County**: qualifying teachers moved up six pay levels (~\$1,917 each).
- **Discovery Schools proposed Raises**: \$2,000 for 10+ yr classroom teachers; \$1,200 for 10+ yr instructional personnel; (SIA), 1.5% for instructional <10 yrs and non-SIA staff; as well as for bus drivers (operating).
- **Total raises paid**: \$149,892. ****required SIA growth allocation**: **** \$112,351. Amount proposed over allocation**: \$37,541, covered by operating funds.

Plan Document: Lists Discovery High School (#8181) and Discovery Academy (#1961). Total allocation: \$112,351, broken down as: \$76,000 for 38 classroom teachers with 10+ years; \$34,891 for instructional personnel with <10 years; \$9,600 for instructional personnel with 10+ years; \$22,335.30 for non-SIA personnel.

Approval of 2026–2027 SIA Plan

- **Motion**: Aaron Nangle moved to approve the 2026–2027 Salary Increase Allocation (SIA) plan and distribution as presented for DALA and DHS.
- **Second**: Sherry Wells
- **Vote**: Passed unanimously

Teacher Lead Funding

Mr. Jemison stated that each year the school is required to provide a certain amount for teachers—normally about **\$300** per teacher—known as **Teacher Lead funding**. This funding is included throughout the year, and the school must ensure those teachers receive it. The funds are to be spent on resources for their classrooms, whether supplies or other items needed for instructional use. Mr. Jemison noted this is a yearly requirement that must be distributed each year.

V. Principals' Reports

A. Personnel Action Reports:

Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA)

Mr. Stephen Frabotta reported **two new hires** and **two in-house position changes**. He presented updates regarding out-of-field assignments, including both ESOL and regular certificate areas.

- **Motion**: Aaron Nangle moved to approve the Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred personnel action report, including resignations, new hires, and out-of-field assignments as presented.
- **Second**: Doretha Tillman
- **Vote**: Passed unanimously

Discovery High School (DHS)

Mr. Darryl Jemison reported that there were **no resignations or new hires** requiring board approval.

B. Enrollment Update

Discovery High School (DHS) — Mr. Jemison reported the following enrollment figures:

Grade	Enrollment	Waitlist
9th Grade	287	28
10th Grade	258	19
11th Grade	195	13
12th Grade	187	11
Total	927	71

Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA) — Mr. Frabotta reported the following enrollment figures:

Grade	Enrollment	Waitlist
6th Grade	351 (target: 360)	53
7th Grade	347	18
8th Grade	330	17
Total	1,028	88

VI. Stakeholder Report

A. Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred (DALA) Teacher of the Year – Mrs. Crystal Adams

Mrs. Crystal Adams provided the following updates:

- **Student Activities:** The school held a social, and several clubs are opening up. It was good to see students interacting with teachers outside the classroom. Both 6th and 7th grade are ahead, and there was strong participation in the 7th and 8th grade social.
- **Disco Live:** The morning program produced by students continues to do well and has improved each year. Students are becoming anchors, and their personalities are showing through the program.
- **Mental Health Specialist:** Mrs. Boatwright has been added as the school's mental health specialist. Mrs. Adams noted she has been phenomenal, working with several students, and has been a valuable addition to the school and its students.

B. Teacher Representative Report – Mrs. Karie Schenkenberg

Mrs. Schenkenberg provided the following update:

- **Open House:** Looking forward to the open house that evening and interacting with 6th grade parents—likely a highlight of the day and week.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Most of the first progress monitoring testing is complete, with makeups underway. Language arts results look good; math score are coming in.

C. Discovery High School (DHS) – Mrs. Erica Hudson, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Erica Hudson provided the following updates:

- **Homecoming:** Homecoming was held the past weekend, with **270 students** attending. It was a great turnout, and students had a lot of fun.
- **Fall Fest:** The next big community event is **Fall Fest on October 23**. Six food trucks are already committed, and the **Lake Wales Art Council** will attend to do pottery with students, which was a huge hit last year.
- **Trunk or Treat Events:** Two separate trunk-or-treat events are planned:
 - The **Haines City community event**, where flyers are made for both schools and distributed with bags of candy.
 - The **second annual trunk-or-treat at DHS on October 31**.

VII. Board Member Reports/Comments

Charlotte Butler commended the schools on their community outreach, stating that it is invaluable to increasing enrollment. She encouraged continued efforts to get the school's name out in the community and let people know what we have to offer. She thanked the team for their work.

Sherry Wells shared that she visited the middle school, had a nice visit with school leadership and spent time on campus. She noted the atmosphere reflects what to expect in the classrooms and learning and commended the overall appearance of the campus, the friendliness of the students, and a good meeting with Mr. Frabotta regarding leadership.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:37 AM by Kevin Warren, President/ Treasure.

Respectfully submitted,

Tania Sims

Secretary, Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred Governing Board

Next Meeting: October 20, 2026
Discovery Academy of Lake Alfred
Meeting at 9:30 A.M.