

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING**

November 20, 2024
Caribe Royale Orlando
8101 World Center Drive
Caribbean 1 and 2
Orlando, FL 32821

Chair Ben Gibson called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. and welcomed members and guests to the State Board of Education meeting. The following members were present: Vice Chair Petty, Esther Byrd, Kelly Garcia, MaryLynn Magar, and Daniel Foganholi. Chair Gibson recognized Rob Hemphill, Pastor of Aloma Church, to deliver the invocation and asked everyone to remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome

Chair Gibson welcomed the newest member of the State Board, Daniel Foganholi.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chair Gibson recognized Manny Diaz Jr., Commissioner of the Department of Education, to present his report. Commissioner Diaz shared that Florida has been ranked number one for education freedom and quality education for students for three years in a row. He shared that the board meeting was being held in conjunction with the annual Charter School conference, with over 1,300 attendees. The conference provides networking opportunities for leaders and educators from charter and private schools. Over 405,000 students attend 738 charter schools and over 500 students seek educational freedom opportunities through Florida's Empowerment Scholarship and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship.

Commissioner Diaz thanked Governor DeSantis for focusing on individual students' needs and providing the best educational options with the growth of charter and private schools.

Commissioner Diaz shared that there has been a rise in false reports submitted through Fortify Florida and false reporting is reckless and it takes away from actual emergencies. False reports carry serious legal consequences. Parents need to know all threats are taken seriously, school safety is important and a priority, and parents and guardians should be urged to discuss these issues with students.

Commissioner Diaz shared that the Florida College System held its second annual cybersecurity competition, featuring 15 teams from 15 institutions, and congratulated the top 3 teams, 1st place Northwest Florida State College, 2nd place Palm Beach State College, and 3rd place Daytona State College.

Commissioner Diaz recognized Ms. Garcia to share an inspirational story. Ms. Garcia shared that the department worked with Katie McGinn and her daughter Christy in determining the best educational assistance. Christy has a visual impairment, and Katie was struggling to find the right services for daughter. They worked with the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services staff, enlisting a state facilitator, and identifying available services through the local school district. They are also receiving support from the Lighthouse of Central Florida.

Commissioner Diaz Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the Commissioner's Report. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from August 21, and September 25, 2024, board meetings. Ms. Byrd made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

K-12 Public Schools – Superintendent Vazquez, on behalf of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS)

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Maria Vasquez, Superintendent, Orange County School District, to provide the FADSS update. Superintendent Vasquez shared that Orange County is expanding its Career and Technical Education program across all districts, with the West Campus opening recently. The school offers 60 programs and serves 56,000 students. The campus in Ocoee offers 12 CTE programs and 4 adult education programs. She prioritized safety and security and has implemented a strict no-tolerance policy for school threats and false reports. Students found making false threats may be arrested or face exclusion from Orange County Public Schools.

College System President Lorenz on behalf of the Council of Presidents

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Georgia Lorenz, President, Seminole State College of Florida, for an update on behalf of the COP. President Lorenz shared that Seminole State, like all Florida College System institutions, has strong relationship prowess with business, industry, and education partners to improve college readiness, enrollment, and completion, resulting in better economic outcomes. This includes promoting college readiness and dual enrollment, fostering educational attainment with university partners, and enhancing partnerships to improve student success. President Lorenz thanked Commissioner Diaz for his leadership and collaborating with state colleges and K-12 public school partners to improve college readiness and enrollment and for working with Chancellor Rodriguez to bring together university and college presidents, faculty, and staff. Program accreditation is another important quality indicator for workforce programs, and Seminole State has successfully reaffirmed its RN to BSN Program and Interior Design Program, with the Council on Interior Design Accreditation (CITA) stating that 90 percent of employers hire graduates from CITA-accredited programs.

Warrington Preparatory Academy, Escambia County

Chair Gibson recognized Adam Emerson, Executive Director, Office Of Independent Education and Parental Choice, to provide an update on Warrington Preparatory Academy. Mr. Emerson thanked the board members and Commissioner for participating in the Charter School Conference and School Choice Summit, as it is the largest conference in terms of attendees and content.

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Eddie Ruiz, Superintendent of Schools of Florida Charter Schools USA, to provide an update. Dr. Ruiz shared that last year at Warrington Prep Academy, the school achieved its highest overall score since 2011, but did not achieve its goal. The school's leadership has been strong, with a new principal and assistant principal. Staff retention has been high, with 73 percent of new staff staying. The school's main strategic initiatives include maintaining a positive culture with parents, students, and staff

and implementing a bag club to reward students' behavior, attendance, and grades. The community is excited about the progress made. Ensuring academic success through a College of Career Readiness program with 88 students passing the cybersecurity digital test and 70 more passing on the second attempt. The school is working on ensuring students leave with three or more certifications in partnership with Triumph Gulf Coast to improve college career readiness.

Update on Lee County School District Compliance with Section 1002.33(14), F.S. regarding Charter School Funding

Chair Gibson recognized David Chappell, Interim General Counsel, for an update on Lee County School District and their compliance with section 1002.33(17), F.S., regarding charter school funding.

Mr. Chappell shared that Lee County School District is in a legal dispute with charter schools over the sharing of sales surtax funds. Both the school district and charters have agreed to begin negotiations to resolve the dispute, with hopes of resolving it in good faith.

Mr. Savage, Deputy Superintendent of Lee County School District, shared that they look forward to resolving the issue and that both sides are operating in good faith.

Chair Gibson requested Mr. Chappell provide an update on department litigation. Mr. Chappell shared that the department is closely monitoring the implementation of the Biden Administration's proposed Title IX amendments regarding gender identity and transgender status. Multiple injunctions have been issued, with the possibility of the Trump Administration removing those Title IX amendments instead of further implementing them. He then shared an update on the Penguin Publishers case and the challenge to Florida's Defense in Women's Sports Act.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of District-Managed Turnaround Option Plans-Step 2 for the School Districts of Gadsden and Leon County

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Paul Burns, Senior Chancellor, for an overview of Turnaround Option Plans-Step 2 for the school districts of Gadsden and Leon County. Sr. Chancellor Burns shared that the board approved Turnaround Option Plan Step 1 for seven districts, including Gadsden County and Leon County. These districts are now presenting their Turnaround Option Plan 2, which includes detailed strategies for improving instruction and student outcomes.

Chair Gibson recognized Superintendent Hanna, Leon County School District, to present their plan. Superintendent Hanna shared that he has collaborated with the Bureau of School Improvement to improve student achievement at Apalachee Elementary School. The plan focuses on teaching standards, student engagement, data analysis, and transformational leadership. The school has seen growth in English Language Arts (ELA), science, and math. The plan targets areas of need, such as 3rd-grade ELA achievement, math learning gains, and 5th-grade science scores, with district support for coaching, collaborative planning, and data analysis. Data has shown an increase in student growth, and the district has met with the Bureau of School Improvement to strengthen its TOP 2 Plan and manage teacher vacancies. Four additional teacher positions and two academic coaches have been placed at Apalachee Elementary School for interventions and replacements. They are also working with Florida A&M to write a Pathways to Career Opportunity Growth Grant (PCOG) and with Tallahassee State College to provide a Para-To-Teacher program.

Chair Gibson recognized Commissioner Diaz for his recommendation. Commissioner Diaz recommended approval of the amended Leon County TOP Step 2.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the commissioner's recommendation. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Gibson recognized Superintendent Eligh Key, Gadsden County School District, to present their plan. Superintendent Key shared that by prioritizing teacher placement, the school invested \$10,000 to recruit teachers to James A. Shanks Middle School while increasing their salaries by \$9,000 over the past three years. They offered the opportunity to anyone who wanted to join the school, ensuring the best teachers were recruited and retained. The apprenticeship program with FAMU and Tallahassee State College is being established, with plans to expand pre-internship activities in Gadsden County Schools. The percentage of unsatisfactory and needs-improvements teachers at James A. Shanks Middle School has decreased from 43 to 28.6 percent. Expanded procedures now hold parents accountable for student absences.

Chair Gibson recognized Commissioner Diaz for his recommendation. Commissioner Diaz recommended approval of the TOP Step 2 for Gadsden County.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the commissioner's recommendation. Ms. Garcia made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Request from North Florida College for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Management

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Phillip Wilkerson, Director of Advising and Retention, for an overview of the request from North Florida College for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Management. Dr. Wilkerson shared that North Florida College's service district includes Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, and Taylor counties. This degree focuses on critical areas like ethics, organizational behavior, strategic planning, human resource management, budgetary oversight, operations management, marketing, and leadership strategies. The degree is designed to prepare students for managerial roles in various agencies and organizations, filling unmet workforce needs without pursuing a degree in Georgia or a remote location. This degree provides an affordable pathway for financially strained students.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Management for North Florida College. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.0018, School Safety Requirements and Monitoring

Chair Gibson recognized Darren Norris, Vice Chancellor, Office of Safe Schools, for an overview of the amendment to rule 6A-1.0018, School Safety Requirements and Monitoring. Mr. Norris shared that Florida is a national leader in school safety, with increased funding for mental health and threat management. Rule 6A-1.0018, established in 2021, requires school safety reporting and training. The proposed changes aim to improve Fortify Florida, address false reports, and promote awareness. The proposed changes include requiring compliance documents to be presented in person to superintendents, school safety specialists, principals, and charter school administrators.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the amendment to rule 6A-1.0018, School Safety Requirements and Monitoring. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rules 6A-23.002, Definitions; 6A-23.003, Eligibility and Procedure for Apprenticeship Program Registration; 6A-23.004, Standards of Apprenticeship; and 6A-23.009, Reinstatement of Program Registration

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Kevin O'Farrell, Chancellor, Career and Adult Education, for an overview of the amendments to rules 6A-23.002, 6A-23.003, 6A-23.004, and 6A-23.009. Chancellor O'Farrell shared that rule 6A-23.002 defines journey workers as individuals with state-approved industry certifications, providing supervision and on-the-job training for apprentices, ensuring a positive relationship and effective supervision. The amendment to rule 6A-23.003 outlines various entities that can sponsor the apprenticeship model, including committees, employers, educational agencies, workforce boards, faith-based organizations, and community organizations, offering opportunities for support and progress. The amendment to rule 6A-23.009 updates contract information for registration and monitoring of all apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, and rule 6A-23.004 proposes changes in apprentice-to-journey worker ratios, starting with a one-to-one ratio for construction and non-construction. This will ensure safety and security in construction-related fields and allow for variances in non-construction occupations.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the amendment to rules 6A-23.002, 6A-23.003, 6A-23.004, and 6A-23.009. Ms. Garcia made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.099811, School Improvement State System of Support for Deficient and Failing Schools

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Peggy Aune, Vice Chancellor, Strategic Improvement, for an overview of the amendment to rule 6A-1.099811, School Improvements State System of Support for Deficient and Failing Schools. Dr. Aune shared that the proposed amendments incorporate legislative changes from House Bill 1285, Senate Bill 7002, and 7004, to the school improvement process, including new requirements for school districts and operators when selecting a charter school turnaround option. The amendment defines inexperienced teachers as needing improvement and allows districts more time to implement the district-managed turnaround if the school is also implementing a community school model. The amendment promotes student achievement and prioritizes high-quality teachers in struggling schools.

Vice Chair Petty requested additional information on the community school model.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the amendment to rule 6A-1.099811, School Improvement State System of Support for Deficient and Failing Schools. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Rule 6A-5.078, Professional Learning Requirements as a Condition of Certificate Reactivation

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Paul Burns, Senior Chancellor, for an overview of new rule 6A-5.078, Professional Learning Requirements as a Condition of Certificate Reactivation. Sr. Chancellor Burns shared that with Governor DeSantis's support for the state's mission of recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality teachers, this new rule keeps Florida first by retaining qualified, passionate educators to return to the classroom without restarting

their certification process. It allows educators to seamlessly reactivate a certificate, ensuring their years of knowledge and expertise are not lost. Senate Bill 7002, passed in the 2024 legislative session, allowed educators to put their certificates in an inactive status.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve new rule 6A-5.078 Professional Learning Requirements as a Condition of Certificate Reactivation. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-10.02413, Civic Literacy Competency

Chair Gibson recognized Kathy Hebda, Chancellor of Florida College System, for an overview of amendment to rule 6A-10.02413, Civic Literacy Competency. Chancellor Hebda shared that Florida's postsecondary civic literacy requirement has seen significant progress since 2017, with over 50,000 students tested in '23-'24, and nearly 116,000 students completing a course in civic literacy. The University of Florida has added a new course, AMS 2010 Civil Discourse and the American Political Order, to its curriculum, which will be offered this spring, passed by legislation in 2023, Senate Bill 266, the Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education to the University of Florida. This move will improve the program for graduation from any Florida college or state university.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve amendment to Rule 6A-10.02413, Civic Literacy Competency. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Ms. Garcia. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT ITEMS

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the consent items. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Comments

Ms. Byrd shared her excitement about Florida leading in civics education and the Hamilton Center for Classical Education.

Mr. Foganholi shared his excitement about being a part of the board and how amazing the conference was.

Ms. Garcia expressed her delight in sharing her story of Katie McGinn and her daughter Christy, emphasizing the importance of understanding the journey of children with disabilities and the efforts of their parents and the department.

Ms. Magar shared her gratitude for the event and charter schools, acknowledging their challenges in obtaining funds, services, and plans. She is not happy about this at all and is glad they are going to address the issue with the department.

Vice Chair Petty shared on the positive changes in education in Florida, highlighting the importance of attending conferences and observing other counties. He expressed the importance of setting high standards and holding teachers, staff, and students accountable.

Chair Gibson thanked the staff for their hard work and praised the commissioner's leadership. He then shared the highlights of the meeting.

Chair Gibson announced that the next meeting would be in Destin on January 15, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Chair Gibson adjourned the meeting of the State Board of Education at 1:21 p.m.

Chris Emerson, Corporate Secretary

Ben Gibson, Chair