

**MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING**

July 22, 2026
Rosen Shingle Creek
9939 Universal Blvd.
Suwannee 14/15
Orlando, FL 32819

Chair Ryan Petty called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. and welcomed members and guests to the State Board of Education meeting. The following members were present: Vice Chair Magar, Layla Collins, Daniel Foganholi, and Erika Fritz-Ochs. Dr. Grazie Christie and Luis Fuste attended by phone. Chair Petty recognized Senior Chancellor Kevin O'Farrell to deliver the invocation and asked everyone to remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Welcome

Consideration of the Appointment of Commissioner of Education

Chair Petty recognized David Chappell, General Counsel, to provide an overview of the first action item: consideration of the appointment of the next Commissioner of Education. Mr. Chappell explained that, under Florida statute, the governor appoints State Board of Education members, who are confirmed by the Florida Senate. The State Board has the exclusive authority to appoint a commissioner, as stated in Article 9, Section 2 of the Florida Constitution.

Chair Petty called for a motion to appoint Dr. Henry Mack as the next Commissioner of Education. Vice Chair Magar made the motion with a second by Mr. Fuste.

Chair Petty recognized Russell Hughes, Superintendent of Walton County Schools; Fred Hawkins, President of South Florida State College; Mark Wilson, President & CEO, Florida Chamber; Eric Hall, President of Pasco Hernando State College; Kevin Carr; Madeline Pumariega, President of Miami-Dade College; Jose Dotres, Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools; Marsan Carr, Executive Director of FACTE; Mel Ponder, President of Northwest Florida State College; Jeffrey Schoop; Tonjua Williams, President of St. Petersburg College; Kam Patton, Interim Superintendent of Alachua County Public Schools; Gabriel Lynch, Stephen Dole; Ava Parker, President of Palm Beach State College; Stephen Johnson; Adam Giery; Jim Henningsen, President of the College of Central Florida; Carol Gauronskes; William Johnson; and Stephana Ferrel, in support.

Chair Petty recognized Dr. Henry Mack for questions from the board.

Dr. Mack thanked the board members, Governor DeSantis, colleagues, and family. He expressed deep gratitude for being considered as the next Commissioner of Education for Florida. Dr. Mack emphasized the honor of stewarding Florida schools during a critical time, respecting past achievements and with Governor DeSantis's leadership. He shared his goal to align education with workforce needs, enhance educational choice, and combat inefficiencies to strengthen America's skilled workforce. He emphasized the importance of foundational educational achievements, advocating for stronger workforce alignment through apprenticeships, partnerships with colleges, and parental involvement. He expressed gratitude and humility, highlighting his commitment to bridging education and labor while fostering skilled and virtuous citizenship. Dr. Mack shared that he pledges to

enhance educational outcomes in Florida, advocating for a parent-centered, competency-based approach to create an opportunity-rich education system for all children. He shared that his focus remains on the collective effort to redefine excellence in education for Florida's future.

Chair Petty recognized the board for questions and remarks for Dr. Mack.

Dr. Christie shared that Dr. Mack, a former philosophy teacher, had a profound impact on her daughter as an educator, contributing to her personal and professional success. She emphasized the importance of Mack's teaching abilities alongside his administrative qualities, expressing confidence that his leadership will benefit the department and all children in Florida. Vice Chair Magar thanked Governor DeSantis for recommending Dr. Mack, and praised him as a respected and forward-thinking academic, and expressed confidence in his ability to support students and parents, drive workforce development, and maintain Florida's educational leadership. Mr. Foganholi shared his appreciation for the Governor's recommendation and commended the efforts of the Department of Education, including chancellors, presidents, superintendents, teachers, and students, for their adaptability amidst constant change. He expressed his enthusiasm for our future direction under Dr. Mack, emphasizing Florida's leadership in education and the importance of continuing to innovate in workforce education. Ms. Collins shared her gratitude to witness the exceptional leadership in education as we discuss our state's progress. It's inspiring to see dedicated leaders advocating for students, demonstrating a commitment to prioritizing their needs. Ms. Fritz-Ochs shared that today marks a significant moment in Florida's education system with the appointment of the next Commissioner of Education. The selected individual should have a strong vision and the necessary leadership and commitment for student success. Governor DeSantis has recommended Dr. Mack for the role, and he is viewed as an excellent choice because of his diverse experience, including classroom practice, higher education leadership, and workforce expertise.

The motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chair Petty recognized Interim Commissioner Burns to present his report. Interim Commissioner Burns expressed his gratitude to the board for the opportunity to serve as Florida's Interim Commissioner. This meeting is significant as it marks the first and last in this role. He shared his appreciation for the focus on student safety, security, and academic success. He shared that Teachers of the Year Week in Orlando was noteworthy, with participants from various districts, aimed at enhancing their instructional practices and mentoring colleagues.

Interim Commissioner Burns shared who our Teacher of the Year finalists are: Laurel Blackburn (regional math coach, Lee County), Sarah Twardy (U.S. history and government teacher, Fernandina Beach High School, Nassau County), Kyndall Brown (agriculture teacher, Harmony Middle School, Osceola County), Bree O'Donnell (fourth-grade math and science teacher, Dune Lakes Elementary School, Walton County), and Nicole Leon (sixth-grade literature teacher, True North Classical Academy, representing Florida Charter School Alliance).

Interim Commissioner Burns shared that end-of-year progress-monitoring results show significant improvements in student learning across Florida. For the third consecutive year, student performance has increased in all categories of statewide assessments, underscoring the effectiveness of Florida's progress-monitoring system in benefiting both students and families.

Interim Commissioner Burns shared that this year, over 60 percent of students are performing at or above grade level in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, with notable increases of 12 percentage points in ELA and 9 percentage points in Mathematics since 2023. The number of students meeting these standards has risen to over 150,000 in ELA and nearly 115,000 in Mathematics. Additionally, 76 percent of schools in Florida received A or B grades for the 2025-2026 academic year, up from 71 percent the previous year, with 60 percent improving or maintaining high ratings. Charter schools performed particularly well, with 78 percent earning A or B grades, reflecting the importance of academic performance under performance-based agreements. Overall, school leaders express a positive outlook as they celebrate these academic improvements.

Interim Commissioner Burns shared that the Florida Advanced Courses and Test U.S. History course is set to be piloted this school year. The department focused on preparing teachers through collaborative efforts from Chancellor Hebda's team, Dr. McDaniel's team, and the Bureau of Standards and Instructional Support. During the training, teachers from 24 schools engaged with the course content, expectations, outlines, and learning strategies to ensure high-quality instruction throughout the pilot.

Interim Commissioner Burns shared that the department hosted Florida's first statewide welding and fabrication challenge, inviting students from public secondary and postsecondary institutions to create original metal work inspired by America's 250th birthday. The submissions showcased the students' creativity, craftsmanship, and technical expertise, highlighting the talent within Florida's workforce education programs. Interim Commissioner Burns encouraged everyone to view the submissions and congratulated the winners and participating schools.

Interim Commissioner Burns shared the important step in Florida's commitment to creating safe, supportive, and resilient school environments through the Resiliency Florida Initiative, spearheaded by First Lady Casey DeSantis. The initiative empowers students to overcome challenges and has received praise for its focus on family support. The board will consider approving a new Resiliency Florida endorsement course for educators, equipping them with strategies to promote key resiliency characteristics that enhance student wellbeing.

Interim Commissioner Burns took the opportunity to recognize three exemplary individuals: the 2026 Florida Principal of the Year, Ms. Brooke Loyed; the 2026 Florida Assistant Principal of the Year, Ms. Reshonda Scott; and the 2026 Florida School Related Employee of the Year, Mr. Chris Hattaway, and highlighting their leadership and commitment to Florida's education system.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the commissioner's report. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 17 and May 14 meetings. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

K-12 Public Schools – Superintendent Rendell on behalf of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents

Chair Petty recognized Dr. Mark Rendell, Superintendent of Brevard County School District, to provide an update on behalf of FADSS. Superintendent Rendell shared that Brevard Public Schools serves 70,000 students across 100 schools, an "A" district for three consecutive years. The strategic plan emphasizes academic excellence, workforce quality, community connection, and operational efficiency. Key achievements include a record graduation rate of 93 percent, a college acceleration rate of 75 percent, and increased third-grade proficiency in English Language Arts. The district boasts a 93 percent teacher retention rate and maintains strong community ties, raising \$120,000 for the United Way. Significant safety improvements were made, such as the installation of weapons detection systems in all high schools. Viera Middle School opened with diverse programs, including International Baccalaureate and extensive career education. Innovative programs like Space Mechatronics and partnerships with local colleges prepare students for careers in aerospace, highlighting the district's commitment to growing Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings.

College System – President Hawkins on behalf of the Council of Presidents (COP)

Chair Petty recognized Fred Hawkins, President of South Florida State College, to provide an update on behalf of the COP. President Hawkins shared that, as Chair of the Council of Presidents, he is honored to represent Florida's colleges and the nearly 700,000 students we serve. This academic year, we are starting from a position of strength, with growing enrollment and successful workforce outcomes. Florida's colleges are nationally recognized for excellence in postsecondary education, demonstrating a significant return on investment for stakeholders. These achievements reflect years of collaboration toward a common goal. Looking ahead, maintaining Florida's leadership requires ongoing innovation, partnership, and a steadfast commitment to excellence. In the upcoming weeks, Florida's state colleges will welcome a diverse group of students, including first-time attendees, returning learners, and high school students engaged in dual enrollment. Each student embodies aspirations for a better future. Graduation ceremonies serve as poignant reminders of this impact, showcasing achievements of perseverance. Daily, these institutions foster new opportunities through dedicated faculty, employer partnerships, and community collaborations, creating essential pathways to prosperity across multiple educational settings. Florida's colleges are vital for economic success, producing skilled graduates to meet workforce demands. The Great 28 initiative focuses on access, affordability, and excellence amid challenges like inflation. Partnerships and investments are crucial for maintaining affordability and enhancing workforce development.

Florida Education Foundation Update on Initiatives

Chair Petty recognized Lindsey Zander, Executive Director of Florida Education Foundation, to provide an update on the Florida Education Foundation Initiatives. Ms. Zander shared that since its establishment in 1984, the Florida Education Foundation has worked with the Department of Education to improve education in Florida by providing resources and partnerships and aims to ensure access to high-quality education for all students, supporting their success in post-secondary education and careers. Governed by a Board of Directors that includes sector leaders and the Florida Teacher of the Year, the Foundation strengthens operations and supports departmental priorities. This year, it expanded programs like the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative, received \$1.5 million in state funding, raised over \$3.3 million in donations, and managed successful audits. Key programs include the Sunshine State Scholars Program and the Summer Literacy Institute for educators, demonstrating the Foundation's commitment to creating opportunities for students and educators through collaboration with education partners. School partnerships enhance our outreach and resources while aligning with departmental priorities.

Action Items

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.0955, Education Records

Chair Petty recognized Tim Hay, Executive Director of Office of Safe Schools, to provide an overview of the amendment to Rule 6A-1.0955, Education Records. Mr. Hay shared that Florida is a leader in school safety, having invested heavily in prevention and response over the past eight years. Key initiatives include annual safety legislation since 2018, a threat management model, and compliance inspections. The state requires a safe school officer on every campus, with over \$1.8 billion allocated for their support and \$278 million for physical security enhancements. Governor DeSantis has emphasized these efforts, highlighted by House Bill 757, which extends safety measures to public postsecondary institutions, enhancing K-12 initiatives. House Bill 757 amends Florida law, mandating school districts to transfer specific education records regarding students' mental health, safety, and welfare to colleges and universities upon enrollment. The proposed amendment to Rule 6A-1.0955 aligns with these requirements, ensuring the timely transfer of records such as concerning behavior reports and psychological evaluations. This change aims to enhance the safety of Florida students, and further implementation procedures are expected to be addressed at the upcoming board meeting in September.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the amendment to Rule 6A-1.0955, Education Records. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Fritz-Ochs. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-4.0165, Specialization Requirements for the Resiliency Educator Endorsement

Chair Petty recognized Dr. Peggy Aune, Vice Chancellor for Strategic Improvement, to provide an overview of the amendment to Rule 6A-4.0165, Specialization Requirements for the Resiliency Educator Endorsement. Dr. Aune shared that Florida's resiliency education initiative aims to equip educators and students to tackle everyday challenges and improve student outcomes. The state has defined 11 resiliency characteristics, including gratitude and critical thinking, and recently approved K-12 Resiliency Education Standards. These standards are supported by over 100 free resources for educators, parents, and volunteers, which include lessons, activities, and a reading list. Volunteers can also participate in Resiliency Coach Training. This endorsement, part of Resiliency Florida, includes a course on 11 resiliency characteristics and how to apply them in various contexts. The initiative aims to help Florida's students develop resilience, enabling them to face adversity and achieve their goals through community support and encouragement.

Chair Petty recognized Stephana Ferrell in opposition.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the amendment to Rule 6A-4.0165, Specialization Requirements for the Resiliency Educator Endorsement. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Rule 6A-1.09953, Statewide Uniform Weighted Grading System in Honors and Articulated Accelerated Courses

Dr. Aune provided an overview of new Rule 6A-1.09953, Statewide Uniform Weighted Grading System in Honors and Articulated Accelerated Courses. Dr. Aune shared that the new Rule 6A-1.09953 implements a Statewide Uniform Weighted Grading System for Honors and Accelerated Courses in Florida to boost student achievement and encourage

challenging coursework. Successful completion of these courses can earn college credit, with the share of Florida high school graduates earning such credits. Florida also leads in Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollment. House Bill 1279 mandates a uniform GPA calculation with additional weights for honors (0.5) and accelerated courses (1.0), effective from the 2026-2027 school year for new grade nine entrants. The rule was developed with input from various educational organizations to clarify how to apply weighting based on course completion. The proposed amendment aims to cross-reference Section 1003.436, Florida Statute, which defines credit and requires school boards to maintain a half-credit system. This clarification will help districts determine when students earn credit under the statute. The new rule seeks to create a uniform standard for recognizing academic achievements in accelerated coursework for all students across Florida's schools.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve new Rule 6A-1.09953, Statewide Uniform Weighted Grading System in Honors and Articulated Accelerated Courses. Vice Chair Magar made the motion with a second by Ms. Fritz-Ochs. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rules 6A-5.065, The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, 6A-5.066, Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs, and New Rule 6A-5.0661, Teacher Preparation Uniform Core Curricula and Courses

Chair Petty recognized Dr. Josey McDaniel, Deputy Chancellor for Educator Quality, to provide an overview of the amendment to Rules 6A-5.065, The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices; 6A-5.066, Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs, and new Rule 6A-5.0661, Teacher Preparation Uniform Core Curricula and Courses. Dr. McDaniel shared that these rules, implementing House Bill 875, represent a significant reform in Florida's educator preparation system. Governor DeSantis and the legislature focus on aligning certification, mentoring, and professional learning in a cohesive framework. Key updates include revisions to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices and the introduction of Uniform Core Curricula. The new practices emphasize evidence-based effective teaching, high expectations, data-informed decision-making, and clarify educators' competencies. The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices Progression Plan outlines essential knowledge for educators. Moreover, amendments to rule 6A-5.066 aim to enhance consistency and accountability by clarifying program approval requirements and ensuring certification exam obligations are met before program completion. Finally, the amendment enhances program accountability by acknowledging statutory examination waivers and assessing programs through candidates' final certification outcomes, offering a clearer measure of effectiveness. It also introduces the Uniform Core Curricula, requiring all state-approved teacher preparation programs to include three essential courses and ensuring a uniform foundation for new teachers. The Introduction to Education course provides insights into cognitive learning science, while High-Impact Teaching and Classroom Management equips candidates with evidence-based instructional strategies aligned with the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices.

Chair Petty recognized Stephana Ferrell, Carol Gauronskas, and William Johnson in opposition.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the amendment to Rules A-5.065, 6A-5.066, and new Rule 6A-5.0661. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Fritz-Ochs. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Rule 6A-4.0166, Specialization Requirements for the Mathematics Endorsement (K-12)

Chair Petty recognized Dr. McDaniel to provide an overview of new Rule 6A-4.0166, Specialization Requirements for the Mathematics Endorsement (K-12). Dr. McDaniel shared that Rule 6A-4.0166 outlines the Specialization Requirements for the Mathematics Endorsement in Florida, created in response to House Bill 1105. This rule requires the establishment of a mathematics endorsement by August 1, 2026, mandating that educators complete specific coursework focused on evidence-based mathematics instruction to enhance their knowledge and instructional skills.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve new Rule 6A-4.0166. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Rule 6A-4.0167, Florida Mathematics Endorsement (K-12) Competencies

Dr. McDaniel shared that Rule 6A-4.0167 defines the Florida Mathematics Endorsement Competencies mandated by House Bill 1105. These competencies specify instructional strategies for teachers to enhance student learning and achievement, focusing on six key mathematics areas: Numbers and operations, fractions and proportional reasoning, algebraic reasoning, measurement, geometric reasoning, and data analysis and probability.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the new Rule 6A-4.0167. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Rule 6A-10.0382, Enrollment and Reporting for School Districts for Students in Career Certificate and Applied Technology Diploma Programs

Chair Petty recognized Dr. Ashley Meros, Chancellor, Division of Career and Adult Education, to provide an overview of new Rule 6A-10.0382, Enrollment and Reporting for School Districts for Students in Career Certificate and Applied Technology Diploma Programs. Chancellor Meros shared that Rule 6A-10.0382 establishes standardized expectations for reporting instructional hours in Florida's workforce education programs, particularly for technical colleges offering career certificates and applied technology diplomas. Accurate reporting is crucial as it affects district funding under S. 1011.80, F.S. The rule ensures consistent calculation and documentation of instructional hours, accommodating flexible schedules and hands-on learning to meet student and employer needs. It clarifies accountability in reporting without introducing new programs or altering existing frameworks, setting clear expectations for enrollment, attendance, and documentation, including how to handle withdrawals and course repeats. The aim is to promote consistency and transparency in Florida's workforce education system, enabling technical colleges to effectively prepare skilled workers.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve new Rule 6A-10.0382. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Fritz-Ochs. The motion passed unanimously.

Innovation Preparatory Charter School vs. The School Board of Broward County

Chair Petty recognized Adam Emerson, Executive Director, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, for an overview of Innovation Preparatory Charter School vs. The School Board of Broward County. Mr. Emerson shared that an appeal by Innovation Preparatory Charter School against the Broward County School Board's denial of its charter school application for grades K-5 was submitted on September 23, 2024. The Charter School Review Committee reviewed the application and identified 50 deficiencies. The school board denied the application on May 13, 2025. The Charter School Appeal Commission later

reviewed the application and the denial and concluded unanimously that the district had competent, substantial evidence to support its decision.

Chair Petty shared that the board did receive a letter on behalf of Innovation Preparatory Charter School as the applicant was unable to attend in person.

Chair Petty recognized Kathy Dupuy-Bruno, General Counsel for Broward County Public Schools. Ms. Dupuy-Bruno shared that Broward County Public Schools supports parental choice in education and collaborates with over 80 charter schools. Broward County Public Schools ensures that all charter schools comply with statutory requirements. However, the application for Innovative Preparatory Charter did not meet these standards, leading to its denial. The Board is requested to endorse the Charter School Appeal Commission's recommendation to support this denial.

Chair Petty called for a motion to uphold the Charter School Appeal Commission's recommendation to deny the appeal of Innovation Preparatory Charter School. Ms. Fritz-Ochs made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Miami-Dade County Public Schools Application for a District Innovation School of Technology

Chair Petty recognized Adam Emerson to provide an overview of the approval of Miami-Dade County Public Schools Application for a District Innovation School of Technology. Mr. Emerson shared that approximately 13-14 years ago, the Florida Legislature approved a measure permitting districts to create schools utilizing innovative technology and granted them flexibilities similar to charter schools. So far, no district has implemented this opportunity until now, with the Miami-Dade School District applying to convert Venetian Parc Academy into the state's first Innovation School of Technology.

Chair Petty recognized Lourdes Diaz, Chief Academic Officer. Ms. Diaz shared that Venetian Parc Academy's vision is to establish a flexible, personalized, mastery-based learning environment with advanced technology to uphold high academic standards. Initially a Pre-K through Grade 2 institution using a Reggio Emilia-inspired curriculum, it aims to expand to a full Pre-K through Grade 8 school. The academy's framework emphasizes mastery-based learning, personalized pathways, and collaborative approaches, integrating blended and project-based methods for practical problem-solving, with dedicated goal time enabling students to progress at their own pace. He shared that our framework follows Florida BEST standards and prioritizes evidence-based reading instruction and math in early education. The curriculum integrates various subjects, including science and arts. Each student is provided a Chromebook, with progress tracked via formative assessments and digital dashboards. Parents receive real-time updates to enhance engagement. The school, located in South Miami-Dade, aims to expand enrollment from under 100 to 406 students in five years, using a random lottery for admissions while ensuring inclusivity for students with disabilities.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Application for District Innovation School of Technology. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.09422, Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring System and Statewide, Standardized Assessment Program Requirements

Chair Petty recognized Juan Copa, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Accountability, Research and Measurement, to provide an overview of the amendment to Rule 6A-1.09422. Mr. Copa shared that this amendment to the statewide assessment program emphasizes Florida's progress in achieving high student achievement goals. Under Governor Ron DeSantis, the state has introduced a pioneering progress-monitoring system for English Language Arts and Mathematics, resulting in notable improvements in student performance and graduation rates. Currently, over 60 percent of Florida students meet or exceed grade-level standards, marking a significant rise since the system's implementation in the 2022-2023 school year. This achievement translates to an increase of 150,000 students in English and 115,000 in Mathematics, comparable to the populations of Hollywood and Clearwater, respectively. First, this rule clarifies the conditions under which concordant scores can fulfill Grade 10 English Language Arts graduation requirements, details assessment requirements for Florida's new advanced courses, and removes unused writing assessment scale scores. Introduced in July, the PSAT for tenth graders will be administered in fall before the Grade 10 assessment in spring. While concerns about diminished student motivation arose, evidence shows performance improved, supporting the rule's intent. The amendment specifies that from the next school year, only PSAT scores obtained post-spring can be used for graduation requirements, with prior scores being irrelevant. Secondly, this rule clarifies the assessment requirements for the FACT U.S. history course, which will be piloted this school year. Students enrolled in this course will not need to take the standard statewide U.S. history assessment, eliminating the need for double testing. This aligns the Florida Advanced Courses and Tests (FACT) program with other accelerated programs like AP, IB, and Cambridge, where students are only required to complete the corresponding end-of-course assessments. Lastly, this technical change removes unused and unreported scores from the writing assessment rule without affecting current practices. The best writing assessment, first administered in the '23-'24 school year, will continue to provide the same rubric scores to students as before.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the amendment to Rule 6A-1.09422, Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring System and Statewide, Standardized Assessment Program Requirements. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Collins. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Request by College of Central Florida for a Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education

Chair Petty recognized Dr. James D. Henningsen, President of the College of Central Florida, to provide an overview of the request for a Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education (ESE). President Henningsen shared that this program is designed to address the urgent need for ESE teachers in Marion, Citrus, and Levy counties by offering a state-approved bachelor's degree in special education. It allows for flexible scheduling, enabling students to work as paraprofessionals while completing the 120-credit hour program. The initiative aims to graduate 24 students annually, addressing 42 teaching vacancies in the region, with an average wage of about \$50,000. This proposal also aims to improve the lives of college students pursuing rewarding careers and exceptional K-12 students by creating opportunities in high-demand professions. It ensures that children with exceptional needs receive education from qualified educators invested in their communities. Strong local school district partnerships highlight the program's demand and the job prospects for graduates.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the request by the College of Central Florida for a Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education. Ms. Collins made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Request by Florida Gateway College for a Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration

Chair Petty recognized Lawrence Barrett, President of Florida Gateway College, to provide an overview of the request by Florida Gateway College for a Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration. President Barrett shared that Florida Gateway College, the fourth-smallest college among the Great 28, serves a community area of 2,863 square miles with 5,000 students. The college is seeking approval for its sixth workforce baccalaureate degree.

Chair Petty recognized Vice President Brady. Vice President Brady shared that Florida Gateway College addresses critical workforce needs in public safety careers across five rural north Florida counties. With many supervisors nearing retirement, demand is high for well-prepared professionals in leadership and emergency management roles. To meet this need, the proposed bachelor's degree offers a flexible 2+2 pathway for current public safety professionals to advance their education without leaving their communities. The program, developed in collaboration with regional partners, is fully online and supported by advisory boards and local agencies, including law enforcement and correctional facilities, aiming to enhance workforce readiness and leadership in public safety.

Chair Petty recognized Gerald Butler, Chief of the Lake City Police Department. Chief Butler shared that higher education is crucial for law enforcement. Chief Butler emphasized this as a retired police officer with 42 years of experience. Increased educational requirements improve police effectiveness and community safety. Research shows that college-educated officers possess better communication skills, enhanced problem-solving, improved report writing, higher ethical standards, and a lower tendency to use force. These advantages highlight the importance of education in promoting professionalism and improving outcomes in the field of law enforcement. A 10-year study in St. Paul, Minnesota, assessed police officers' disciplinary actions, vehicle collisions, accommodations, and sick leave relative to their educational levels. Findings revealed that officers with bachelor's degrees received more commendations, took less sick leave, encountered fewer traffic collisions, and faced fewer disciplinary actions, and also excelled in report writing, technology use, adaptability, and problem-solving.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the request by Florida Gateway College for a Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Specialized Associate in Arts Transfer (SAAT) Degree Program(s) in the Florida College System, Northwest Florida State College – Civil, Computer, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering

Chair Petty recognized Mel Pounder, President of North Florida State College, to provide an overview of the new Specialized Associate in Arts Transfer (SAAT) Degree Program(s) in the Florida College System, Northwest Florida State College – Civil, Computer, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. President Pounder shared that the SAAT degree allows students to complete over 60 credit hours for their intended bachelor's degree, unlike the standard Associate in Arts degree. This program fulfills general education requirements and includes prerequisites for specific bachelor's programs while preventing unnecessary coursework. Financial aid covers more than 60 credit hours, ensuring guaranteed admission to selected bachelor programs after completion. Northwest Florida State College partners with the University of West Florida to offer SAAT degrees in various engineering fields, with options

for full completion at their Fort Walton Beach campus. Given the growth of the aerospace and defense industry in Northwest Florida, there is a significant demand for engineers, supported by the presence of major military installations in the area. He stressed the need to cultivate local students through engineering degrees at Northwest Florida State College and encourage them to stay in the region.

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve the new Specialized Associate in Arts Transfer (SAAT) Degree Program(s) for Northwest Florida State College. Vice Chair Magar made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi.

Consent Items

Chair Petty called for a motion to approve consent items 19-36.

Chair Petty recognized Carol Gauronskas, in opposition, for consent item #19.

Ms. Collins made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Comments

Ms. Fritz-Ochs thanked Dr. Burns for his impactful service as Interim Commissioner during a critical time for Florida's education system. She appreciates all the hard work of educators and school leaders. Mr. Foganholi thanked the staff for their support, especially Interim Commissioner Burns for stepping up, and congratulated Dr. Mack and all the Teacher of the Year finalists, as well as this year's winners across the state. He expressed appreciation for all educators involved in this process. Ms. Collins shared gratitude for the new Commissioner and highlighted the need for effective school choice practices and urgent workforce education reforms, given the aging tradesman population. Vice Chair Magar thanked Interim Commissioner Burns for effectively leading the department, achieving notable successes in education, including top rankings, improved school grades, and graduation rates. With a new era approaching, there is excitement about exploring new ideas and continuing to serve the community together. Chair Petty shared there's little to add beyond previous comments, and it's an honor to serve on this board. I value our discussions and appreciate the questions raised. This meeting is his favorite due to the Teacher of the Year celebration, and it marks his seventh year on the board. He shared his excitement about quicker access to last year's results, highlighting the achievements of teachers in Florida and the number of students performing at grade level in Math and English Language Arts, indicating program effectiveness.

Chair Petty announced that the next meeting would be on September 16, 2026, in Polk County, FL.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Chair Petty adjourned the meeting of the State Board of Education at 12:20 p.m.