

MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING

May 24, 2023
MDC Hialeah Campus
1780 W 49th St, Hialeah, FL 33012

Chair Ben Gibson called the meeting to order at 9 a.m., the following members were present: Vice Chair Ryan Petty, Esther Byrd, Kelly Garcia, MaryLynn Magar, Grazie Christie and Monesia Brown. Chair Gibson asked everyone to stand for the Presentation of Colors, presented by the Miami Dade College School of Justice, Florida Law Enforcement Academy Honor Guard and remain standing for the National Anthem performed by Miami Dade College student, Dalila Lugo.

Chair Gibson recognized Madeline Pumariega, President, Miami Dade College (MDC) to welcome the board. President Pumariega thanked the Chair and State Board members for coming to MDC and highlighted the diverse student body at the college, consisting of 125,000 students from over 100 countries speaking 63 languages. Adding that MDC is renowned as "democracy's college" because its students come here seeking the American dream through education. President Pumariega stated that MDC holds the top position nationwide in granting degrees to Hispanics, ranks third in granting degrees to African Americans and emphasized the college's focus on the 2+2 mission, where students obtain their Associates of Arts degree and transfer to a traditional four year university.

President Pumariega also noted the growth in MDC workforce programs, crediting the leadership of Commissioner Diaz and senior chancellors. Continuing, President Pumariega discussed the college's initiatives to address workforce needs. Including collaborative programs and partnerships with companies such as Tesla and Warren Henry for apprenticeship programs in automotive technology. As well as a partnership with the school district to combat the teacher shortage, implementing a teacher residency program and a Teacher Apprentice Program. President Pumariega informed the board about the college's partnership with Amazon Web Services in cloud computing and highlighted the stackable nature of their tech programs, allowing students to earn certificates, Associates in Science, and potentially a Bachelor's degree.

Commissioners Report

Chair Gibson recognized Manny Diaz Jr., Commissioner, Department of Education to present the Commissioners Report. Commissioner Diaz thanked the board and expressed his happiness to be in his hometown of Hialeah, and acknowledged the remarkable evolution of MDC. He commended President Pumariega and Dr. Tonjua Williams for their outstanding leadership in the college system, emphasizing their ability to be responsive to community needs. He highlighted MDC as a prime example of diversity and inclusivity, attributing its success to the college system's approach. Commissioner Diaz expressed gratitude to President Pumariega for hosting the State Board of Education meeting and noted that they had been engaged in activities throughout the week. Including gatherings with college presidents and university presidents at the Wolfson campus and a convening with college presidents and superintendents from across the state. Commissioner Diaz then recognized Cory Dowd, Director, Legislative Affairs to provide a comprehensive review of the legislative session's outcomes regarding education.

Mr. Dowd thanked the board and acknowledged the positive impact of the 2023 legislative session on education policy and funding in the state of Florida. Mr. Dowd highlighted the historic year for teachers in Florida, emphasizing the significant investments made in teacher pay. Stating that, under Governor DeSantis' leadership, over three billion dollars have been invested in teacher pay. Mr. Dowd noted that while previous funding focused on raising starting teacher salaries, this year's funding provides flexibility for districts to give pay increases to veteran teachers as well. Mr. Dowd highlighted several impactful investments in teacher recruitment and retention programs. Including a ten-million-dollar appropriation for the heroes in the classroom bonus initiative, which offers bonuses to retired law enforcement, first responders, and veterans who choose to become teachers. A nine-million-dollar investment in the New Teacher Apprenticeship Program, allowing students with an Associate of Arts degree to become teaching apprentices under experienced mentor-teachers while pursuing a Bachelor's degree. Adding that, teaching mentors who participate in this program will receive a bonus. Continuing, Mr. Dowd noted an investment in teacher recruitment for the dual-enrollment teacher scholarship program. This initiative aims to address the need for faculty with graduate degrees to teach college-level courses in high schools. Current teachers will have the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree with the condition that they commit to teaching dual-enrollment courses in their districts.

Mr. Dowd then discussed legislation empowering teachers, including the Paycheck Protection Bill and the Teachers Bill of Rights, which establishes a new right for teachers to direct classroom instruction. Adding that, the legislature also allocated 100 million dollars to the Florida College System Program Fund. Mr. Dowd mentioned Senate Bill 266, which reinforces the purpose of higher education institutions to prepare students as critical thinkers and for the workforce. It also requires collaboration between the Department of Education and the Board of Governors to review and revise general education courses. Additionally, Senate Bill 240 focused on workforce education and built upon previous legislation called the REACH Act. The bill ensures that workforce programs are aligned with in-demand, high-skill, and high-wage occupations, and aligns education systems and incentives accordingly. Mr. Dowd highlighted the emphasis on career and technical education at the middle school and high school levels, recognizing the importance of early engagement in these programs. Concluding, Mr. Dowd emphasized the significance of House Bill 1, the largest expansion of school choice in the history of the United States. Stating that the legislation expands the Family Empowerment Scholarship and the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship to all families, regardless of income status.

Continuing, Commissioner Diaz talked about Title IX and the proposed rule change suggested by the Biden Administration. Stating that, the intent of Title IX is to provide women and girls a level playing field for athletics and education. Commissioner Diaz added that the proposed updates to Title IX by the U.S. DOE contradicts this purpose and will erase years of hard fought opportunities for women athletes by forcing states to allow biological males to participate in female sports. Commissioner Diaz mentioned that the Florida Legislature passed the Women's Sports Act that prohibits biological males from participating in female sports, aiming to protect opportunities for girls under Title IX. Commissioner Diaz joined Chancellor Ray Rodrigues, of the State University System, in demanding the withdrawal of the proposed Title IX rule, asserting that it threatens athletic opportunities for females nationwide. He highlighted the importance of protecting the rights of female students to participate in athletics without discrimination. Commissioner Diaz also mentioned the submission of a comment to the federal government, which also received support from the Secretary of Education in Wyoming, North Carolina, and Arkansas. Which emphasized the significant role of athletics in the education system and the progress made in providing opportunities for women and girls. Commissioner Diaz then recognized Kathy Hebda, Chancellor, Florida College System to provide an update on the convening of College Presidents, University Presidents, and School Districts.

Chancellor Hebda thanked Commissioner Diaz for his leadership and vision in organizing the summit and stated that the first day of the meeting involved a robust discussion between college presidents, the Commissioner, and Chancellor Rodrigues regarding new legislation and the review of general education courses. Adding that the Department will be working with faculty committees to review general education core courses based on new standards set by Senate Bill 266. With institutions assessing their additional general education offerings. Continuing, Chancellor Hebda mentioned that, the summit also focused on dual-enrollment and included technical college directors, superintendents, and dual-enrollment leads. Chancellor Hebda thanked the Department and leadership for organizing a successful summit, which received positive feedback from school districts and colleges. Chair Gibson then requested the Department acquire the employment contracts for the Florida College System Presidents for review.

Commissioner Diaz then recognized Senior Chancellor Henry Mack, stating that it will be Sr. Chancellor Mack's last board meeting, as he is moving on to new opportunities and thanking the Sr. Chancellor for all his hard work with the board and colleges. Continuing, Commissioner Diaz recognized Diego Favia, a student at MDC, for academic excellence. Stating that Mr. Favia came from Venezuela in 2018 and did not know English. Adding that, despite not knowing English Mr. Favia excelled academically, graduated with a 4.0 GPA from MDC while participating in several undergrad research projects, and received the 2022 Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Award.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the commissioner's report. Ms. Brown made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Minutes from March 22, 2023 meeting

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the minutes from March 22, 2023 meeting. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Petty. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

Florida College System – President Williams on behalf of the Council of Presidents

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Tounja Williams, President, St. Petersburg College for a brief update on behalf on the Council of Presidents. President Williams thanked the board and provided an update on the Florida College System (FCS). President Williams highlighted the unity among FCS presidents in building a new funding formula that would enhance student success through improved completion, job placement, transfer pipelines, and career dual-enrollment courses. Pending Governor DeSantis approval, the FCS would receive a 15.2 percent increase in the budget. President Williams acknowledged the Commissioner's convening with Chancellor Rodrigues, emphasizing the importance of strong pipelines and partnerships with technical colleges and the K-12 system. He mentioned the successful trustee commission held in Tallahassee, where trustees of the Great 28 colleges engaged with legislators to discuss the goals and needs of the FCS. President Williams mentioned upcoming leadership transitions within the FCS and expressed confidence in their continued success and impact. President Williams assured that she would remain involved and thanked everyone for their leadership and commitment to unlocking opportunities and improving lives through education.

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

Chair Gibson recognized Ken Kenworthy, Superintendent, Okeechobee for a brief update on behalf of the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS). Superintendent Kenworthy, thanked the board for the opportunity to speak and expressed his excitement surrounding graduation and the resilience demonstrated by students. Superintendent Kenworthy mentioned the convening and thanked Commissioner Diaz for organizing it. Continuing, Superintendent Kenworthy shared that in his district, 20 out of 340 seniors would graduate with their AA degree, with the aim to increase access to higher education. He emphasized the success of Okeechobee High School in earning 418 industry certifications, a 17 percent increase from previous years. Superintendent Kenworthy commended the progress monitoring system, which provided valuable information for instructional planning and closing the achievement gap. He expressed satisfaction with the legislature's actions, particularly the increase in teacher salaries and the extension of (Deferred Retirement Option Program) DROP. Superintendent Kenworthy highlighted the impact of scholarships in his district, with students earning approximately \$1.2 million, including significant contributions from the local community. He mentioned the participation of South Elementary School in the Florida civic debate and the opening of a new high school, highlighting plans for shared facilities and a marine technology lab. Superintendent Kenworthy concluded by emphasizing the ongoing work during the summer, such as hiring, budget planning, facility repairs, and curriculum development.

Action Items

Ratification and Adoption of Comment Rejecting the Biden Administration's Proposed Changes to Title IX Regulations, which threaten athletic opportunities for females in Florida schools

Chair Gibson recognized Andrew King, General Counsel, Department of Education to provide the board a brief overview of the ratification and adoption of a comment that rejects the Biden administration's proposed changes to Title IX regulations. Mr. King thanked the board and addressed the comment, stating the comment is in opposition of the proposed rule because it would make it more difficult for Florida schools to protect women's sports, as mandated by the Fairness in Women's Sports Act of 2021. Mr. King emphasized that the rule would erase years of progress for female athletes and create insurmountable obstacles for them to compete with males who identify as females. Mr. King then provided an overview of the current rule and the proposed changes, highlighting the internal inconsistencies and the difficulty for Florida schools to comply with the law. Mr. King added the proposed rule introduces two additional factors that schools must prove to segregate sports based on sex if it affects transgender students, but the meaning of these factors is unclear. Concluding, Mr. King added that Governors from other states, including the Commissioner and Chair Gibson, have signed the comment and Mr. King sought board ratification for Chair Gibson's signature on the comment. Chair Gibson opened the board for questions. Dr. Christie commented that she wants to ratify the comment; Vice Chair Petty and Ms. Garcia echoed this comment. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the Ratification and Adoption of Comment Rejecting the Biden Administration's Proposed Changes to Title IX Regulations, which threaten athletic opportunities for females in Florida schools. Ms. Byrd made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Petty. The motion passed unanimously.

Hope Operator designation

Chair Gibson recognized Adam Emerson, Executive Director, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, to provide the board a brief overview of the next two items. Mr. Emerson thanked the board, and provided an update on the developments at Warrington Middle School. He informed them that since the previous telephonic board meeting, the Escambia County School Board had approved the charter agreement with Renaissance Charter School and Charter Schools USA. Adding that, Renaissance Charter School had executed the contract, bringing the district back into compliance. Continuing, Mr. Emerson stated that a community meeting was held with representatives from both parties and the outgoing leadership at Warrington, resulting in a path forward for the school. Mr. Emerson emphasized the urgency of the situation and requested that the board grant Schools of Hope operator status to Renaissance Charter School for their turnaround work at Warrington Middle School. He explained that Schools of Hope status comes with significant resources to support a successful start in the upcoming fall semester. Mr. Emerson added that the Department would actively engage with the school and district by conducting weekly check-ins to address any barriers and ensure a smooth implementation. Chair Gibson opened the board for questions. Ms. Brown asked for an update on the school at the July meeting. Ms. Magar asked if there will be a shared timeline of events for parents to know the status of the school. Vice Chair Petty asked when additional funds would be made available to the district and school. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve Hope Operator designation for Renaissance Charter School, Inc. Ms. Brown made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-6.03315, Private School Scholarship Compliance

Mr. Emerson thanked the board and presented an amendment to the rule 6A-6.03315, Private School Scholarship Compliance. Mr. Emerson explained that the amendment aligns with the recently passed Senate Bill 846, which mandates that participating private schools must not be owned or controlled by a foreign country of concern, as defined in the statute. Violation of this provision is considered a threat to student health, safety, and welfare, leading to the suspension of scholarship funds and potential denial, suspension, or revocation of the school's participation in the program. Mr. Emerson added the rule amendment aims to ensure compliance with the new law and protect students' well-being. Mr. Emerson highlighted ongoing investigations into at least two private schools suspected of having ties to China, emphasizing the significance of the issue. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve amendment to Rule 6A-6.03315, Private School Scholarship Compliance. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Dr. Christie. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Emergency Rule 6AER23-02, District Threat Management Coordinator Designation and Reporting

Chair Gibson recognized Adam Miller, Senior Chancellor, to provide the board a brief overview of Emergency Rule 6AER23-02, District Threat Management Coordinator Designation and Reporting. Sr. Chancellor Miller thanked the board and stated that this emergency rule, associated with House Bill 543, focuses on school safety legislation. With the proposed emergency rule mandating that, each school district in the state designate a district-wide threat management coordinator and report their information to the Department of Education. The rule outlines the initial responsibilities of the threat management coordinator, which include ensuring training for all district and school-level threat management personnel, serving as part of the threat management team, and acting as a liaison with the Office of Safe Schools. Sr. Chancellor Miller added that the urgency of implementing this rule stems from the extensive work required to establish a new threat management process statewide as directed by House Bill 543. The identification of district threat management coordinators is crucial for initiating staff

training at the local level, as approximately 45,000 individuals are expected to be trained by the Office of Safe Schools by January 1st. The district coordinators will play a key role in facilitating this training. Chair Gibson opened the board for questions. Vice Chair Petty commented on his approval for the rule. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve Emergency Rule 6AER23-02, District Threat Management Coordinator Designation and Reporting. Vice Chair Petty made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Rule 6A-5.079, Florida School Counseling Standards

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Paul Burns, Chancellor, Division of Public Schools to provide the board a brief overview of the next five rules. Dr. Burns thanked the board and presented new rule, 6A-5.079, Florida School Counseling Standards. Stating that the purpose of this rule is to establish requirements related to school counseling standards based on House Bill 1557 from the 2022 legislative session. The rule aligns with the statewide resiliency initiative and aims to strengthen counselors' ability to support students in developing resilience skills. It sets the foundation for school counseling across the state, including school counseling preparation programs, educator certification requirements, professional learning, and evaluation systems. Continuing, Dr. Burns added that the rule connects to the four pathways for additional support for students and mentorship, namely the resiliency coach, resiliency endorsed educator, school counseling apprentice, and school counseling mentor. These pathways will provide caring adults with training to build strong foundations of resiliency in students. The rule aligns with existing resiliency initiatives and resiliency education standards, emphasizing character, personal responsibility, mentorship, citizenship, volunteering, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Chair Gibson opened the board for questions. Ms. Magar asked where someone can get the training. Chair Gibson asked what the Department is doing to support school counselors and to encourage recruitment. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve New Rule 6A-5.079, Florida School Counseling Standards. Ms. Garcia made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of New Rule 6A-7.0714, Library and Instructional Materials Objection Report

Dr. Burns thanked the board and presented new rule 6A-7.0714, Library and Instructional Materials Objection Report. Stating that the purpose of this new rule is to provide school districts with instructions for reporting materials to the Department that a parent or resident of the district has objected. The Department will use this information to publish an annual objection report, which will identify materials that have been removed or discontinued as a result of objections. Continuing, Dr. Burns added the rule is being established due to House Bill 1467 from the 2022 legislative session, which requires reporting at both the district and state levels. The rule aims to standardize the reporting process statewide, enhance transparency for the public, and protect students from inappropriate materials. The objection form will be due to the Department by June 30, and the Department will publish the list of removed or discontinued materials by August 30th. Chair Gibson opened the board for questions. Dr. Christie asked how long a book will remain on the shelf if an objection has been made. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve new rule 6A-7.0714, Library and Instructional Materials Objection Report. Ms. Brown made the motion with a second by Ms. Garcia. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Gibson mentioned that one comment was received, in support for the rule.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-1.09401, Student Performance Standards

Dr. Burns then presented rule 6A-1.09401, Student Performance Standards, stating that this rule sets the expectations for what Florida students should know and be able to do. With proposed updates in

three areas: health education standards, which will include topics such as internet safety, social media, and screen time to protect students from online risks and promote critical thinking; social studies and financial literacy standards that will incorporate the 13 principles from Senate Bill 1054, emphasizing financial stability and independence; and social studies for students with significant cognitive disabilities which will be in alignment with the recent civics and Holocaust education standards. Continuing Dr. Burns stated the next steps will involve developing course descriptions to accompany the revised standards. Adding that these standards were developed through a rigorous process involving workgroups and public feedback. Chair Gibson opened the board for questions. Ms. Brown asked about the feedback received from teachers and parents in the development of this rule. Chair Gibson asked if there is any discussion about student loans and the potential impact from them in the revised standards. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve rule 6A-1.09401, Student Performance Standards. Ms. Garcia made the motion with a second by Ms. Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rules 6A-4.002, General Provisions and 6A-4.004, Florida Educator's Certificates with Academic, Administrative, Degreed Career and Technical, and Specialty Class Coverages

Dr. Burns then provided the board an overview of rules 6A-4.002, General Provisions and 6A-4.004, Florida Educator's Certificates with Academic, Administrative, Degreed Career and Technical, and Specialty Class Coverages. Dr. Burns stated that these two educator certification rules are aimed at giving educators more time and options to obtain their professional certification. Which is in alignment with the priority of teacher recruitment and retention in Florida. The amendments, extend the validity period of temporary certificates from three to five years, and will be automatically implemented in the educator certification system. Dr. Burns added that the amendments allow educators with college teaching experience to fulfill certain requirements, provided they have served as a full- or part-time employee or contract worker of a college or university allowing them to use their college teaching experience to demonstrate mastery of general knowledge and professional preparation. Chair Gibson mentioned that one comment was received from Kathy Boehm in support of the rule. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve rules 6A-4.002, General Provisions and 6A-4.004, Florida Educator's Certificates with Academic, Administrative, Degreed Career and Technical, and Specialty Class Coverages. Dr. Christie made the motion with a second by Ms. Magar. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Amendment to Rule 6A-5.066, Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs

Dr. Burns then presented the amendment to rule 6A-5.066, Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs. Stating that the rule covers initial and continued approval procedures for three types of teacher preparation programs in Florida: initial teacher preparation programs, Educator Preparation Institutes, and district certification programs. The revisions aim to ensure that all three-program types are preparing highly qualified teachers for Florida students. Continuing, Dr. Burns stated that the proposed changes were developed with input from stakeholders, including district staff, college/university staff, teachers, and administrators. With a workgroup convened to assist in writing the rule language. Adding that the amendments were prompted by statutory changes from Senate Bill 2524. The changes include updating performance metrics, removing obsolete metrics, updating the uniform core curricula to align with legislation, clarifying language regarding student teaching program requirements, and updating the grading metrics for teacher preparation programs. Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve rule 6A-5.066, Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs. Dr. Christie 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. Dr. Christie made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Comments

Chair Gibson opened the board for member comments starting with Ms. Magar. Ms. Magar thanked the department for their hard work and added that the state's top education ranking is a result of unity and collaboration among stakeholders. Ms. Brown expressed her excitement for the progress made and thanked the commissioner and department for their efforts in improving schools and emphasized the board's commitment to ensuring that students receive the best education. Ms. Garcia thanked the department for their hard work throughout the legislative session and expressed her excitement for House Bill 1. Dr. Christie acknowledged all the hard work the department does and added that education is Florida is a gateway to opportunities and happiness. Ms. Byrd echoed the comments of Dr. Christie and asked if the commissioner would provide the board a brief update of the video circulating online in Broward County.

Commissioner Diaz thanked the board and stated that the video in reference went viral on social media showing pictures of books being removed at a Broward County School. Following an investigation the department found that an employee had falsely stated that the State was there taking out books. Commissioner Diaz then clarified that the State of Florida and Department does not ban or remove books and added that there is a statute in place that creates a local process for communities and local school boards to put in place a process to review these books for many different reasons. Commissioner Diaz added that the video in question was false and the books had been placed in boxes at the end of the year for district cataloging; with the employee that posted the video under investigation.

Vice Chair Petty thanked the Commissioner and criticized the video released on social media that portrays false arguments about book banning in Florida. Vice Chair Petty also commended Commissioner Diaz for his leadership and expressed gratitude for the work done during the legislative session. Chair Gibson echoed the comments of his fellow members and thanked Senior Chancellor Mack for his leadership and outstanding work done during his time with the department and the Commissioner for his work in convening the summit.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Chair Gibson adjourned the meeting of the State Board of Education at 12:14 P.M. EST.

Chris Emerson, Corporate Secretary

Ben Gibson, Chair

