

**MINUTES**  
**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**MEETING**

February 17, 2025  
Conference Call

Chair Ben Gibson called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. The following members were present: Vice Chair Petty, Esther Byrd, Daniel Foganholi and MaryLynn Magar.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Approval of 2025-26 Amended Education Operating and Fixed Capital Outlay Legislative Budget Request**

Chair Gibson recognized Suzanne Pridgeon, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Operations, to provide an update on the 2025-26 Amended Legislative Budget Request. Ms. Pridgeon shared that the Amended 2025-2026 education, operating, and fixed capital outlay budget request includes \$432 million for Florida's VPK program, \$29.7 billion for K-12 public education, and an additional \$246.7 million for educators. Also, the budget allocates \$565 million for school safety initiatives, including \$300 million for safe schools, \$190 million for mental health, \$6.5 million for the Guardian program, and \$5.5 million for youth mental health awareness training. The Florida budget also includes \$632 million for Bright Futures Scholarships, and \$10 million for Florida First Responder Scholarship. Performance funding encourages state colleges to continue initiatives, with \$20 million for the College Workforce program and \$30 million for the Student Success Incentive Fund. The budget also includes \$449 million in workforce development funding and \$100 million for the Workforce Development capitalization Senate grant.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the Amended 2025-26 Education Operating and Fixed Capital Outlay Budget Request as well as authorizing the Commissioner of Education to make technical adjustments. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of A.A.A. Scholarship Foundation – Florida, LLC as a Scholarship Funding Organization for 2025-26**

Chair Gibson recognized Adam Emerson, Executive Director of the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, for an overview of the A.A.A. Scholarship Foundation that was tabled at the January 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Emerson shared that A.A.A. Scholarship Foundation has now agreed to comply with the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Unique Abilities Purchasing Guide developed by the University of Central Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the A.A.A. Scholarship Foundation – Florida, LLC as a Scholarship Funding Organization for 2025-26. Ms. Byrd made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, Chair Gibson announced that the next meeting would be in Tallahassee, April 9, 2025, and adjourned the meeting of the State Board of Education at 11:15 a.m.

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Chris Emerson, Corporate Secretary

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Ben Gibson, Chair