

**MINUTES  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MEETING**

April 9, 2025  
Tallahassee State College  
444 Appleyard Dr.  
Student Union Ballroom  
Tallahassee, FL 32304

Chair Ben Gibson 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 Petty, Esther Byrd, Daniel Foganholi, Kelly Garcia, and Dr. Grazie Christie. MaryLynn Magar attended by phone. Chair Gibson recognized Pastor Dean Inserra of City Church Tallahassee to deliver the invocation and asked everyone to remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Welcome**

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Jim Murdaugh, President of Tallahassee State College, to welcome the board and provide an update on behalf of the Council of Presidents. President Murdaugh shared that Florida is one of the top five states in dual enrollment with over 90,000 high school students participating. This brings savings of 89 million to Florida families. The Florida College System (FCS) strives to accelerate growth and achieve the Governor's goal of being number one in the educational workforce. President Murdaugh thanked Governor DeSantis and Commissioner Diaz for their continued support.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chair Gibson recognized Manny Diaz Jr., Commissioner of the Department of Education, to present his report. Commissioner Diaz thanked Tallahassee State College (TSC) and President Murdaugh for hosting the April State Board Meeting. Commissioner Diaz shared that April is Florida College System month, and Florida has been number one in the nation for higher education for eight years straight.

Commissioner Diaz shared that the National Summit on School Safety brought together representatives from 20 states to discuss Florida's leading approach to school safety.

Commissioner Diaz recognized Mason Good, a nursing student at North Florida College (NFC), who stepped up during hard times and demonstrated selfless resilience and kindness during hurricanes Idalia and Helene. Mr. Good volunteered with NFC's disaster relief partnership, distributing supplies, serving meals, and clearing debris from the community.

Commissioner Diaz recognized Raines Mosteller, a junior at Tallahassee Collegiate Academy (TCA), located at Tallahassee State College. A dedicated student with a 3.5 GPA, founder of the Robotics Club at TCA, and member of the Lincoln High swim team.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the Commissioner's Report. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Dr. Christie. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Minutes**

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 15 and February 17, 2025, board meetings. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Dr. Christie. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Updates**

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

Chair Gibson recognized Darryl Taylor, Superintendent of Calhoun County School District, to provide the FADSS update. Superintendent Taylor shared that Calhoun County has limited industry, and the district's economic base is primarily forestry, government employment, healthcare, and small businesses. A half-cent sales tax generates revenue and provides \$692,000 in funding. Calhoun County is the fifth smallest county in Florida, with a population of 13,000, which includes 2,000 students and 300 employees.

### **Update on Board Conditions Placed on the Approval of Madison County School District's Turnaround Option Plan for Greenville Elementary School**

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Peggy Aune, Vice Chancellor for Strategic Improvement, for an update on conditions placed on Madison County School District's turnaround option plan for Greenville Elementary School. Dr. Aune shared that the plan involves closing Greenville, Lee, and Pineta Elementary Schools. Students from these schools will attend Madison County Central School in 25-26. Conditions include regular updates on the consolidation process, monitoring Greenville Elementary student performance, and regular updates on Madison County Central School repairs.

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Karen Pickles, Superintendent of Madison County School District, to provide an update on Madison County School's turnaround option plan. Dr. Pickles shared that condition one: The school consolidation process, is being monitored through committees, with recommendations presented to the district board. Events like end-of-year activities and staff training are planned to provide continuous feedback and facilitate effective communication. Condition two: District and school leadership are committed to monitoring student performance and the transition process into a new school, collaborating with the BSI team, Just Reads Florida, and a math coach to support academic growth and bring students up to grade level. Condition three: Updates to our facilities, the gym is completed, the roof is almost finished, and site drainage issues are being addressed due to the hurricanes. Also, the district received the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) liquidation request and has submitted documentation of \$1.6 million to replace the chillers in the school and high school.

Chair Gibson requested an update on the conditions at the next board meeting.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Approval of Amendment to Rules 6A-5.066, Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs and 6A-5.081, Approval of School Leadership Programs**

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Paul Burns, Senior Chancellor, for an overview of amendments to rules 6A-5.066 and 6A-5.081. Sr. Chancellor Burns shared that the state of Florida leads in education reform, ensuring high-quality education free from ideological influence. Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, the state has taken decisive action to uphold academic

excellence and remove content that does not align with state standards. House Bill 1291 strengthens this effort by ensuring teacher preparation programs and school leadership preparation programs are grounded in subject matter expertise and not governed by political agendas. Amendments to Rule 6A-5.066 will prohibit courses in these programs from violating Florida law regarding discrimination, distorting historical events, and endorsing systemic racism.

Sr. Chancellor Burns shared that amending rule 6A-5.081, which governs principal preparation programs at districts and universities, is crucial because research shows that school leaders are essential for student achievement. The rule governs level one and level two programs, leading to educational leaders' certification and principal certification. These amendments mandate teacher and principal preparation programs align with the state's academic achievement vision, prioritize high-quality instructions, and remove courses prioritizing political narratives.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the amendment to rules 6A-5.066 and 6A-5.081. Ms. Garcia made the motion with a second by Dr. Christie. The motion passed unanimously.

### **American Academy of Palm Beach K-8 Charter School vs. the School Board of Palm Beach County**

Chair Gibson recognized Adam Emerson, Executive Director, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, for an overview of the charter appeal.

Mr. Emerson shared that the Palm Beach County School District Charter appeal held an emergency meeting and approved the charter application.

Ms. Garcia shared that Florida is a school choice state, with over 400,000 students attending charter schools. The Board supports expanding school choice, ensuring that no one-size-fits-all education is provided, addressing issues like the Palm Beach School District's 90-day delay, and ensuring adequate charter applications are processed.

Chair Gibson withdrew the item from the agenda.

### **Approval of Amendment to Rule 6M-8.700, Provider on Probation; Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Improvement Plan and Implementation; First Year Probation**

Chair Gibson recognized Cari Miller, Chancellor of Early Learning, for an overview of amendment to rule 6M-8.700, Provider on Probation; Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Improvement Plan and Implementation; First Year Probation. Chancellor Miller shared that the amendment focuses on corrective action for providers failing to meet minimum expectations under the new VPK accountability system. The rule requires providers on probation to apply for good cause exemptions for VPK programs serving a significant population of students with limited English proficiency or disabilities, and complying with health and safety standards.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the amendment to rule 6M-8.700, Provider on Probation; Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Improvement Plan and Implementation; First Year Probation. Vice Chair Petty made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Request from St. Johns River State College for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Digital Art and Media**

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Melanie Brown, Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice President, for an overview of the request from St Johns River State College for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Digital Art and Media. Dr. Brown shared that the program addresses the local need for graduates with expertise in digital design, imaging, photography, video and audio production, 3D animation, and motion graphics. The degree requires 120 semester credits and provides a competitive edge in the digital design industry. The job growth in the service district and related occupations is projected to increase by 9 percent by 2032, with an average annualized salary of over \$53,000.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the Bachelor of Applied Science in Digital Art and Media. Vice Chair Petty made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Approval of Request from St. Johns River State College for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Performance, Design and Production**

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Brown for an overview of the request from St Johns River State College for a Bachelor of Applied Science in Performance, Design, and Production. Dr. Brown shared that this degree will prepare students for various fields, including audio technology, video editing, and theme park production. The program is a hybrid of in-person and online classes, requires 120 semester credits, and is supported by industry partners and advisory board members.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the Bachelor of Applied Science in Performance, Design, and Production. Ms. Byrd made the motion with a second by Ms. Garcia. The motion passed unanimously.

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

Chair Gibson amended the agenda by moving Consent Item No. 10, amendment to rule 6A-1.09441, Requirements for Programs and Courses that Are Funded Through the Florida Education Finance Program and For Which the Student May Earn Credit Toward High School Graduation, to action.

Chair Gibson recognized Kathy Hebda, Chancellor, Florida College System, for an overview of amendment to rule 6A-1.09441. Chancellor Hebda shared that this annual update of the course code directory includes updated computer science courses, retired courses, and new career and technical education courses in AI, industrial engineering, telecommunication, and advanced manufacturing.

Chair Gibson recognized Andrew Spar in opposition.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the annual approval of amendment to rule 6A-1.09441. Dr. Christie made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve consent items 11-21. Ms. Byrd made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Member Comments**

Ms. Byrd expressed how valuable she found the School Safety Summit and appreciated the foundation's efforts and looks forward to attending next year. Dr. Christie shared how her daughter's passion for being a teacher echoes the sentiments of other board members, emphasizing the importance of supporting these educators. Ms. Garcia expressed her gratitude to Sr. Chancellor Burns and the staff for keeping CRT, DEI, and activism out of teacher preparation programs and for the commitment of teachers to focusing on high-quality instruction. Vice Chair Petty appreciated the board's leadership and vision of education. Chair Gibson thanked the board for their time and shared the importance of bettering others' lives and continuing to lead in Florida. He highlighted the importance of accountability in schools, the VPK rule, the Madison County turnaround plan, and the importance of holding up the highest standards, such as passing rules on teacher prep and school leadership programs.

Chair Gibson announced that the next meeting would be in Miami on June 4, 2025.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, Chair Gibson adjourned the meeting of the State Board of Education at 11:45 a.m.

---

Chris Emerson, Corporate Secretary

---

Ben Gibson, Chair