

MINUTES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MEETING

June 4, 2025
Miami Dade College
Wolfson Campus 254 N.E. 4th St., Building 3,
Chapman Conference Room 3210
Miami, FL 33132

Chair Ben Gibson called the meeting to order at 10:30 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, MaryLynn Magar, and Dr. Grazie Christie. Chair Gibson recognized Guillermo Velasquez, Pastor of House of Faith in Miami, to deliver the invocation, and West Rubin New World School of the Arts High School, for the National Anthem.

Welcome

Chair Gibson recognized Madeline Pumariega, President of Miami-Dade College, to welcome the board. President Pumariega shared that Miami-Dade College celebrated its commencement ceremony with 14,000 students and issued 15,000 credentials, with a focus on workforce development. Miami-Dade College serves 17,000 dual-enrollment students, saving 12.5 million for families. The college has also led the effort by being first in Florida to offer college credit certificates and associate's degrees in artificial intelligence (AI). Nine Hundred faculty, full and part-time, have undergone AI training, and our collaboration with university partners, Florida International University, Florida State University, and the University of West Florida, focused on ensuring a robust teacher preparation program. President Pumariega shared her appreciation for Commissioner Diaz's leadership and extensive experience, which has significantly improved Florida's education system, making it the top state in the nation in education.

Chair Gibson shared that a new commissioner appointment will take place after learning that Commissioner Diaz has been selected as interim President at the University of West Florida. The members of the board also thanked Commissioner Diaz for his dedication and leadership.

Chair Gibson recognized Steve Koncar, Chief of Staff, to introduce the item of the Appointment of a new Commissioner. Mr. Koncar shared that under Florida Statute, the Governor appoints all members of the State Board, with confirmation by the Senate, and that the State Board of Education shall appoint the Commissioner of Education.

Chair Gibson shared that we have a unique opportunity to appoint Anastasios "Stasi" Kamoutsas as the next Commissioner of Education in Florida. Mr. Kamoutsas has worked closely with the state's education system for six years and has been involved in major decisions. The appointment is contingent on the University of West Florida Board of Trustees and Board of Governors approving Commissioner Diaz as the Interim President.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to appoint Anastasios "Stasi" Kamoutsas as the next Commissioner of Education. Ms. Byrd made the motion with a second by Mr. Foganholi.

Chair Gibson recognized Jeanette Nunez, President of Florida International University; Torey Alston, President of Broward College; Mel Ponder, Commissioner of Okaloosa County; Monica Colucci, Miami-Dade School Board Member; Mike Bileca, Miami Dade College District

Board of Trustee; Madeline Pumariega, President of Miami-Dade College; John Davis, Secretary of Florida Lottery; Sarah Velasquez, Miami-Dade Public School Teacher; Jose Oliva, Member, Board of Governors (BOG); Richard Corcoran, President of New College of Florida; Steadman Stahl, President of South Florida Police Benevolent Association; and Roberto J. Gonzalez, Miami-Dade Commissioner 11th District; in support.

Chair Gibson recognized Mr. Kamoutsas to share a few words. Mr. Kamoutsas expressed his gratitude for being considered as Florida's next Commissioner of Education and thanked God, Governor Ron DeSantis, and the Governor's staff for their trust and support. He also thanked his family, State Board members, and the staff of the Department of Education. As a former student and parent, he shared his commitment to ensuring Florida remains the top state for education, promoting student-centered learning, parental involvement, and teacher support.

Chair Gibson called for the vote to appoint Anastasios "Stasi" Kamoutsas as the next Commissioner of Education, contingent on Commissioner Diaz being approved as Interim President of University of West Florida by the BOG effective July 14, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chair Gibson recognized Manny Diaz Jr., Commissioner of the Department of Education, to present his report. Commissioner Diaz thanked President Pumariega for hosting the summit with the State Board. He also thanked Chancellor Ray Rodriguez, State University System, for all his work with the summit. The purpose of the summit is to create a seamless communication system between state college presidents, university presidents, and superintendents, focusing on student-first philosophy and streamlined collaboration across regions.

Commissioner Diaz shared the success of higher education for nine consecutive years, thanks to the efforts of staff, board members, and university and college leaders. Also highlighted the importance of reforms in K-12 and pre-K-12 education and praised the Great 28 college presidents for their support.

Commissioner Diaz shared recent legislative accomplishments, including an agency bill, a high school athletics bill, and a teacher education program revamping bill.

Commissioner Diaz shared his confidence that the next commissioner will continue with full force in removing pornographic content from schools.

Commissioner Diaz thanked the board for their service and support in various initiatives, including establishing the largest universal school-choice program in the country. He also thanked Vice Chair Petty for his support and leadership in School Safety, highlighting the importance of a national safety summit for Florida, and thanked Dr. Paul Burns, who is an asset to the children of Florida.

Commissioner Diaz recognized Isaura Valdes, Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High; Chelsea Arias, Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High; Noah Thomas, who at the age of 14 graduated high school with an Associate of Arts Degree in Mechanical Engineering, and his brother Nathan Thomas, who also graduated at the age of 14.

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

Minutes

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 9, 2025, board meeting. Dr. Christie made the motion with a second by Ms. Garcia. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

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

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Jeffrey Allbritten, President of SouthWestern State College, to provide an update from the COP. President Allbritten shared his gratitude to Commissioner Diaz for his work with the educational system in Florida and looks forward to working with President Lorenz, Seminole State College of Florida and the new commissioner-designate, Stasi. He also shared that Florida's 28 colleges have seen a 5.8 percent growth in enrollment in '23-'24, with 672,000 students enrolled.

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

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. David Moore, Superintendent of Indian River County School District, to provide the FADSS update. Superintendent Moore shared that Indian River County is a complete-choice school district, with 100 percent of its schools being schools of choice. The district competes for the right to educate its community's children and is one of ten academically high-performing school districts. The district has improved from 38 to 9 in Florida and the success is attributed to community engagement, reinventing education, and supporting principals and teachers through K-8 education.

School District of Hillsborough County

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Paul Burns, Senior Chancellor, for an overview of Hillsborough County School District regarding pornographic materials in schools. Sr. Chancellor Burns shared that Superintendent Ayres will provide an update on library materials in his district, discussing legislative frameworks passed over the past years, and that Hillsborough County Public Schools removed six books from their libraries due to inappropriate content, following letters from the Commissioner and Attorney General.

Chair Gibson recognized Superintendent Van Ayres to give the board an update. Superintendent Ayres shared that six books were removed from circulation, and 57 books were placed under review and made unavailable after receiving letters from the Commissioner and the Attorney General. After much discussion, he assured the board that this type of inappropriate material will not be allowed in their libraries.

Chair Gibson shared that the board has zero tolerance for pornographic materials in schools.

Legislative Update

Chair Gibson recognized Amelia Johnson, Deputy Chief of Staff, to provide an overview of the 2025 Legislative session. Ms. Johnson shared that Florida's K-20 education system is being strengthened by 2025 legislative bills, including Senate Bill 112, which will support vulnerable student populations with autism spectrum disorder. She also shared the Governor has approved several bills to protect students from medical emergencies.

Designated remembrance days and observances for students, including Fentanyl Awareness and Education Day and Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Governor approved Senate Bill 248, House Bill 443, and House Bill 875, expanding student athletic opportunities and improving teacher preparation in Florida. These bills address administrative red tape, charter school administration, and establish the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence. The School Safety Bill, Senate Bill 1470, expanded the School Guardian Program to childcare facilities and modified security guard training. House Bill 1105 and House Bill 1255 make adjustments to Florida's K-20 education system, including sharing local government infrastructure surtax revenues, modifying charter school conversion procedures, and implementing job programs.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Amendment to Rules 6A-10.0315, Demonstration of Readiness for College-Level Communication and Computation

Chair Gibson recognized Kathy Hebda, Chancellor of Florida College System, for an overview of amendment to rule 6A-10.0315. Chancellor Hebda shared that the rule compiles ways students can demonstrate readiness for college credit in Mathematics and English Language Arts. The proposed amendment adds the Classica Learning Test 10 and Pre-CLT and the assessment of college-level communication and computation skills of students who intend to enter an A.S or A.A.S. degree program at an approved district career center.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the amendment to rule 6A-10.0315. Ms. Magar made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Request from Lake-Sumter State College for a Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education

Chair Gibson recognized Dr. Laura Byrd, Interim President, Lake Sumter State College for an overview of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education. Interim President Byrd shared that the program, which includes the Earn as You Learn component, to create a Florida-approved, high-standard, fact-based model for teacher education. The partnership with Sumter County School District is helping tackle teacher recruitment and retention issues, ensuring local students and paraprofessionals receive high-quality training.

Superintendent Kornegay, Lake County School District shared that the program will provide specialized education for two hundred K-12 students with significant disabilities, focusing on personalized instruction and professional development.

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve the proposed Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education for Lake-Sumter State College. Ms. Garcia made the motion with a second by Vice Chair Petty. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT ITEMS

Chair Gibson called for a motion to approve consent items 9-14. Mr. Foganholi made the motion with a second by Ms. Byrd. The motion passed unanimously.

Member Comments

Ms. Byrd shared her concern for book reviews in all districts and thanked the Chair, Commissioner, and the board for their attention to inappropriate books in schools.

Mr. Foganholi shared his gratitude to Miami-Dade College, Commissioner Diaz, and Commissioner Kamoutsas and congratulated the graduates across the state. Ms. Garcia thanked the staff and members of the board and looks forward to working with Commissioner Kamoutsas. Ms. Magar thanked the staff for a great job and shared that Commissioner Diaz will be missed and looks forward to working with Commissioner Kamoutsas. Vice Chair Petty shared his excitement to work with Commissioner Kamoutsas, and that superintendents need to understand the process for approving books in schools. Chair Gibson echoed all members' comments, commending the leadership for its successful education models, hard work, and dedication to future generations' education.

Chair Gibson announced that the next meeting would be July 16, 2025, in Orlando.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Chair Gibson adjourned the meeting of the State Board of Education at 2:13 p.m.

Chris Emerson, Corporate Secretary

Ben Gibson, Chair