VPA GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2026 - 2:00 pm ET

Access Point: 111 E. Monument Avenue, Suite 605

Kissimmee, FL 34741

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at **2:06 p.m.**

Present: Stevie Johns, Lisa Fuhrmeister, Jennifer Parker, Chuck Korger, Jessica Howell
Guests: Thomas Sternberg, Sandra Anthony, Megan Sandoval, Ed DePersis, Madison Jandrew, Wendy Ross, Debra Bele, Eric Waller, Brian LeRoy

II. Routine Business

Approval of Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes

Lisa Fuhrmeister made a motion to **approve the August 20, 2026 meeting agenda**. Jessica Howell seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Stevie Johns made a motion to **approve the July 17, 2026 Board meeting minutes.** Jennifer Parker seconded the motion. The motion passed.

III. Second Amendment to Charter Contract

Thomas Sternberg presented the proposed Second Amendment to the Charter Contract and reviewed the purpose and major provisions of the amendment.

The amendment provides for VPA to transition to an **alternative education program/accountability model**, allowing the school's performance to be evaluated under Florida's alternative education accountability structure rather than the traditional A–F school grading system. Mr. Sternberg explained that this change reflects the significant population of at-risk students already being served by VPA and does not fundamentally change the educational program provided to currently enrolled students.

Additional provisions discussed included:

- Revision of the school's mission to specifically address alternative education, at-risk students, and dropout/credit recovery students.
- Appropriate identification and coding of eligible credit-recovery students.
- A freeze on new student enrollment upon execution of the amendment while the school focuses on currently enrolled students during the transition period.
- Recruitment of an additional Board member with experience in alternative education.
- Continued collaboration with Osceola County regarding implementation of the alternative education model.

Lisa Furhmeister inquired about funding. Mr. Sternberg explained that general funding for the school would continue under the existing model.

Stevie Johns asked about timing of the amendment and approvals. Mr. Sternberg shared that the waiver of termination hearing will be held on September 16, 2026 at the state board meeting. Clarification was provided that the Charter Amendment is an agreement between VPA and the School District of Osceola County and is separate from the waiver of termination currently pending before the Florida State Board of Education. Approval of the amendment prior to the September State Board meeting would demonstrate the corrective actions already being undertaken jointly by VPA and the District.

Lisa Fuhrmeister made a motion to approve the **Second Amendment to the Charter Contract** as presented. Jessica Howell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. State of the School

School Improvement Plan

Dr. Sandra Anthony presented the 2026–2027 School Improvement Plan (SIP) and companion materials previously provided to the Board. Dr. Anthony reviewed the school's revised mission, which expands VPA's focus on meeting students where they are, removing barriers to learning, accelerating academic growth, and providing alternative educational pathways for students requiring flexibility, personalization, and intensive support.

The School Improvement Plan is summarized with these focus areas:

- Improving mathematics achievement and learning gains.
- Improving ELA achievement and learning gains.
- Increasing the graduation rate.
- Strengthening Tier I benchmark-aligned instruction.
- Expanding Tier II and Tier III interventions.
- Implementing high-dosage tutoring.
- Increasing student attendance and engagement.
- Strengthening instructional coaching and leadership accountability.
- Increasing monitoring of instructional implementation and student outcomes.

The school will establish a monthly School Improvement Team meeting beginning August 27, 2026. Progress toward SIP goals will be reported to the Board monthly, including student achievement, learning gains, attendance, engagement, implementation progress, successes, and areas requiring additional attention.

Dr. Anthony reviewed measurable academic targets, including increased mathematics and ELA achievement and learning gains. The plan also establishes increased expectations for benchmark-aligned instruction. By October 2026, at least 50% of core teachers are expected to demonstrate consistent implementation, increasing to 100% by January 2027.

The Board discussed development of a comprehensive school improvement dashboard that will eventually allow monitoring of schoolwide and individual student data, including prior-year performance, FAST Progress Monitoring, i-Ready results, attendance, engagement, and intervention data.

Unified School Improvement Grant (UNISIG)

Dr. Anthony presented the school's Unified School Improvement Grant opportunity. The approximately $1.5 million grant will provide significant additional resources to support the School Improvement Plan.

Planned grant-supported resources include approximately 15 positions and services, including:

- Academic tutors supporting high-dosage tutoring.
- High-dosage tutoring scheduling and attendance support.
- Two instructional coaches.
- A transformation specialist with school turnaround experience.
- A UNISIG program coordinator.
- Content coaching in mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies.
- A full-time interventionist.
- Continued professional development related to i-Ready.
- Technology-supported instructional coaching.
- Supplemental instructional/test preparation resources.

The school intends initially to operate its high-dosage tutoring program internally rather than outsource the service.

VI. Enrollment Update

Wendy Ross reported current enrollment of 1,047 students, consisting of:

- 207 new students.
- 840 returning students.

Re-enrollment and rollover activities were reported as complete.

VII. Finance Report

Ed DePersis presented the financial update.

For FY26, Mr. DePersis requested approval of a final revised budget reflecting approximately $40,000 in additional expenditures. The revision was requested to align final expenditures with the budget reported to Osceola County.

The Board also reviewed current cash balances, accounts payable, projected enrollment and weighted FTE, state funding, grant funding, and FY27 financial projections.

The FY27 financial model reflects the current enrollment freeze and assumes attrition during the year. The financial forecast also considers the anticipated recovery of approximately $2.1 million in FY26 funding overpayment and the impact of the new school improvement grant funding.

Dr. Anthony shared the Salary Increase Report was placed in Dropbox.

Dr. Anthony reported that the school adheres to the **Internet Policy** as provided by Osceola schools and monitors appropriate student use of school-issued devices, internet resources, and social media platforms and will continue providing related guidance to students and families.

X. E-Rate Program and USAC Inquiry

Eric Waller and Brian LeRoy provided an overview of the federal E-Rate program and discussed the recent inquiry received from the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). The Board was informed that E-Rate is an FCC program administered by USAC that provides eligible schools and libraries with discounted telecommunications and internet connectivity services.

Mr. Waller explained that routine USAC requests for supporting documentation are common; however, the current inquiry differs because it originated from USAC's legal office and seeks confirmation that appropriate procedures and arm's-length relationships among the parties have been maintained.

ACCEL reported that it had responded to the inquiry directed to the management organization. The school/Board also received an inquiry requiring a response.

Mr. LeRoy reviewed the E-Rate competitive procurement process, including the bidding process, and vendor the evaluation matrix. The Board was presented procurement and evaluation information associated with VPA's Category 1 and Category 2 E-Rate vendors, including the evaluation criteria and rationale used to select the providers.

Thomas Sternberg expressed concern that although ACCEL had delegated authority to administer the E-Rate procurement process, the vendor selections and contracts had not previously been formally presented to the Board. He recommended that the Board consider ratification of the selections following its review of the procurement information. Discussion then focused on the filing of 471forms during the contract of the duration. Each spring, a 471 is filed if nothing changes. The funding is based on free and reduced lunch and enrollment numbers. Monitoring of services is then provided.

Board members discussed the importance of ensuring that future processes provide appropriate and timely information to the Board before actions are taken on its behalf. The Board distinguished its concern regarding the process and communication from the vendor-selection decisions presented.

Lisa Furhmeister asked if we received this inquiry and if we have responded. Mr. Waller replied that both ACCEL and the school received an inquiry about the 30 days. Thomas Sternberg stated that the vendor was not provided to the board and the board needs to ratify the decisions that were made before a response is provided. He stated that there was no issue with the selection or ACCEL's authority, just that it was not presented.

Brian Leroy stated that bids went out in 2025 and contracts were signed in 2025. 2026 was an extension year. He stated that he would send the PowerPoint deck will be sent to the board. Brian Leroy stated that these contracts are between the board and Whalley. He clarified that ACCEL is the consultant. Mr. Sternberg asked who signed on behalf of the board. Discussion continued. Natalie Long signed the contract as a delegate. Megan Sandoval shared that the contract provides delegation for situations like this as part of the services agreement. Thomas Sternberg affirmed the authority and stated a board member will need to certify the letter. Chuck Korger expressed that processes and procedures going forward can be better aligned and if board meetings need to called, they can be in advance.

Conversation on e-Rate paused for Board Actions.

Action Items

Lisa Fuhrmeister made a motion to approve the revised **FY2026 budget** as presented. Chuck Korger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jessica Howell made a motion to approve the **2026–2027 School Improvement Plan** as presented. Stevie Johns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jessica Howell made a motion to approve the **2026–2027 UniSIG Grant Application**. Chuck Korger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jessica Howell made a motion to approve the **Salary Increase Report.** Stevie Johns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

On a motion by Lisa Furhmeister, the Board **approved the Internet Safety Policy as presented**. Jennifer Parker seconded the motion. The motion approved unanimously.

Following the action items, discussion, Thomas stated that he can respond to the inquiry and will share with the entire board. If the board does want to respond, they can if they feel they have enough information. Lisa Furhmeister expressed concern that she did not know about the issue until today. Thomas stated that after he spoke to ACCEL counsel, he reached out to USAC and the timelines do not apply to the school. He thought it would be better to speak to the board as a whole then individual board members. He stated he appreciated the tech group who explained the process. He stated the board can ratify the decision that ACCEL made. Stevie Johns added that the board has enough to ratify the decision and the concern she has is of process and discussions can be had going forward to ensure processes are in place.

Thomas added that the board can rest on ACCEL is a great company and they can rely on their decision making. Mr. Sternberg stated this matter was on him as he wanted to take this matter to the board to strengthen the decision for the Erate vendor on behalf of VPA.

Stevie Johns made a motion to ratify the selection of the E-Rate providers for both **Category 1 and Category for the start and duration of the contract.** The motion was seconded by Lisa Furhmeister and Jennifer Parker and passed unanimously.

Thomas Sternberg indicated that the Board's ratification and these meeting minutes would be incorporated into the response to USAC. Counsel will circulate the draft response to the full Board for review/certification prior to submission.

Board Counsel will work with the Board Chair to obtain the required signature on the Second Amendment to the Charter Contract so that it may be transmitted to Osceola County. Thomas stated he would take care of that.

XII. Next Meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for **September 17, 2026**.

XIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XIV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at **3:36 p.m.**