VPA GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

September 17, 2026 - 2:00 pm ET

Access Point: 111 E. Monument Avenue, Suite 605
Kissimmee, FL 34741

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Stevie Johns called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

Present: Stevie Johns, Lisa Fuhrmeister, Jennifer Parker, Chuck Korger, Dr. Jessica Howell
Absent: None
Guests: Thomas Sternberg, Dr. Sandra Anthony, Megan Sandoval, Ed DePersis, Wendy Ross, Debra Bele, John Duffy, Lana Holiday (Moss, Krusick and Associates, LLC)

II. Routine Business: Approval of Agenda and Prior Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Jennifer Parker, seconded by Jessica Howell, the Board approved the agenda for September 17, 2026. Motion carried.

On a motion by Stevie Johns, seconded by Chuck Korger, the Board approved the minutes of the August 2026 meeting. Motion carried.

III. Information and Discussion Items

A. FY26 Annual Audit

John Duffy of Moss, Krusick and Associates, LLC presented the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2026. Lana Holiday also attended. The auditors issued an unmodified opinion. The report on internal control and the Florida Auditor General management letter contained no findings, and no issues arose during the audit.

Highlights included:

- Enrollment increased by 392 students over the prior year.
- Total revenues were approximately $8.6 million and total expenses approximately $8.59 million. The change in net position was a positive $46,000, compared with approximately $5,400 the prior year.

- Cash at June 30, 2026 was approximately $247,000, and total net position was approximately $87,000.
- Amounts due from and due to other agencies (approximately $7.0 million and $6.6 million) reflect the timing of activity with Accel, the school's management company.
- Three new GASB pronouncements had no material effect on reported amounts.
- The second charter amendment was disclosed as a subsequent event.

Mr. Duffy confirmed the statements would be issued as final upon Board approval. He noted that Board approval is also needed Form 990.

B. Head of School Report

Charter Renewal. Dr. Anthony recommended preparing the charter renewal application as a K–12 school with alternative accountability, for a five-year term. The application will be provided to the Board by September 23. She asked the Board to hold a special meeting on September 29 4:00 p.m. to review it before it is submitted to the School District of Osceola County. She also reported that the district had approved the second charter amendment.

School Advisory Committee. Board members were invited to the next School Advisory Committee meeting on September 30.

Out-of-Field Teachers. Dr. Anthony presented the out-of-field teacher report, which is required by statute. All out-of-field assignments are in ESOL. Affected teachers are completing the required 300 hours of ESOL training, and parents will be notified after Board approval.

Staffing. New hires have accepted positions as interventionists and as third-grade, geometry and social studies teachers, and are being onboarded. Two resignations were received: a second-grade teacher (expected) and a fifth-grade teacher (unexpected). The school is still recruiting a high school social studies teacher. Three UniSIG-funded positions remain open: a second instructional coach, a second math instructional coach and a transformation specialist.

Mission Moment. Students and classrooms marked the 25th anniversary of September 11.

Assessment. FAST Progress Monitoring 1 participation was 91%. Of tested students, 82% scored at Levels 1–2 in mathematics and 67% in ELA reading. On i-Ready, elementary participation was 97%, and 81% of those students performed one or more grade levels below. Secondary participation was approximately 60–65%, and 61% of those students were below grade level in reading. Under the new accountability structure, the school will focus on learning gains in ELA, including for the lowest 25%. Dr. Anthony reported that the school improvement plan had been presented to the district, and that the district had provided a new report identifying students who count toward learning gains.

C. State Board of Education: Petition for Waiver of Termination

Dr. Anthony reported on the September 16 State Board of Education meeting in Polk County. Dr. Anthony, members of the administrative team and staff, Thomas Sternberg and ACCEL representatives attended. On a split vote, the State Board decided not to terminate the charter, subject to the following conditions:

1. Notify all parents of the school's two consecutive F grades and of their option to choose another school, by October 1.
2. Prepare a turnaround plan that meets the standards of the Bureau of School Improvement (BSI).
3. Appear before the State Board of Education monthly to give progress updates.
4. Hire teachers with satisfactory value-added model (VAM) scores, including screening candidates before hiring.
5. Retain a turnaround administrator who meets Bureau requirements.
6. Create and implement a professional learning plan.
7. Open the school's virtual classrooms for observation.

Dr. Anthony reported that after the meeting the Commissioner of Education made a comment indicating he remains committed to closing the school. Accel and legal counsel are reviewing the implications.

D. Legal and Legislative Update

Attorney Thomas Sternberg encouraged all Board members to watch the State Board meeting video. He advised that the State Board and the Department of Education are expected to exercise much closer oversight over the coming year. He noted that the State Board was concerned that no Board member attended the meeting.

Mr. Sternberg reviewed related conditions under the recently approved charter amendment. These include adding a Board member with an alternative education background, a revised mission and an enrollment capacity limit. Under alternative accountability status, the school will no longer receive a school grade. Mr. Sternberg advised that the Board should actively review and approve the parent notification letter and the turnaround plan before the October 1 deadline. He recommended that the parent letter be direct and factual, and that it be reviewed with the Department of Education before it is sent.

E. Board Discussion

Board Member Chuck Korger asked about the potential financial impact if enrollment declines by 10–20% after the parent notification. Steven Narcisse and Ed DePersis reported that they have modeled several enrollment scenarios, that Accel will continue to support the school financially, and that the budget will be revised if needed. Dr. Anthony committed to holding family forums and giving the Board weekly updates on parent concerns.

Counsel asked Board members to identify candidates with alternative education experience to fill an additional seat on the board.

F. Enrollment Update

Ms. Wendy Ross reported 992 students currently enrolled: approximately 809 returning students and 183 new students. Mr. Sternberg advised that no new students may be enrolled this year under the State Board's conditions, so enrollment can only decrease. Dr. Anthony confirmed that enrollment closed August 10 and that withdrawn students are not being reinstated.

G. Salary Increase Allocation (SIA)

Steven Narcisse presented the 2026–27 Salary Increase Allocation plan. The state provides approximately $400,000 in restricted funds for FY27 to raise teacher salaries. Funds will be released after the plan is approved and reviewed by the district.

H. Finance Report

Mr. DePersis presented the FY27 financial update.

- Projected average enrollment is 725, reflecting no new enrollment. Weighted FTE is projected at 616.
- The school is currently funded on 883 FTE. The most recent payment was based on more than 1,000 students, and projections will be adjusted next month.
- FY27 revenue is projected at approximately $3.6 million, compared with $6.9 million in FY26. This includes approximately $2.0 million in state funding, after the FY26 overpayment adjustment, and $1.6 million in grants. The grants include approximately $1.2 million in school improvement grant funds and $367,000 in Title I.
- Expenses are projected to be flat with FY26. The projected FY27 deficit is approximately $5.1 million.
- August cash activity: beginning balance $722,052.74, receipts of approximately $479,866, ending balance $506,601.38.
- The September Accel payment request is $745,780.81.
- The projected FY27 ending payable to Accel is approximately $12.5 million, an increase of about $5.5 million from FY26.

Board Member Korger asked about the plan to settle the payable to ACCEL and move toward financial self-sufficiency. Mr. DePersis will meet with Mr. Korger and he offered to hold a recurring monthly finance committee meeting. The Chair will schedule this beginning in November. Mr. Sternberg also noted the Florida School Choice Conference in Orlando in November as a possible opportunity for an in-person Board meeting.

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.

IV. Action Items

On a motion by Dr. Howell, seconded by Chuck Korger, the Board approved the FY26 (2025–26) Annual Audit as presented. Motion carried.

On a motion by Lisa Fuhrmeister, seconded by Jennifer Parker, the Board approved the Accel Payment Request for September 2026 as presented. Motion carried.

On a motion by Chuck Korger, seconded by Jessica Howell, the Board approved the FY27 Budget as presented. Motion carried.

On a motion by Stevie Johns, seconded by Jennifer Parker, the Board approved the 2026–27 Salary Increase Allocation plan. Motion carried.

On a motion by Lisa Furhmeister, seconded by Jessica Howell, the Board approved the Out-of-Field Teacher Report. Motion carried.

On a motion by Jessica Howell seconded by Stevie Johns the Board approved holding a special Board meeting on September 29, 2026. Motion carried.

V. Committee Reports and Board Comments

The Board began its new committee structure several weeks ago. A Board member recommended that the Executive Committee meet after the Strategic Committee, so that it can act on the Strategic Committee's recommendations. The Chair agreed to follow up on scheduling.

Board members thanked school leadership, staff, Accel and legal counsel for their work over recent months. Ms. Fuhrmeister encouraged the Board to meet in person, possibly at the upcoming Florida School Choice

Conference. Mr. Korger described the current challenge as an opportunity for the school to show what it can do. The Chair agreed to arrange in-person time with the Board.

VI. Public Comment

The Board opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were offered.

VII. Next Meeting

A special Board meeting was scheduled for September 29, 2026.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.