**VPA GOVERNING BOARD MEETING**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**September 29, 2026 - 4:00 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, Dr. Jessica Howell, Chuck Korger, Jennifer Parker, Lisa Fuhrmeister
**Absent:** None
**Guests:** Dr. Sandra Anthony, Thomas Sternberg, Lori Gambino, Madison Jandrew, Mary Gifford, Megan Sandoval, Debra Bele

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

### Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Stevie Johns, seconded by Jennifer Parker, the Board approved the agenda for September 29, 2026. Motion carried.

## III. Information and Discussion Items

### A. Charter Renewal

Dr. Anthony reported that the school received an extension for its charter renewal application. The application will now be submitted in the second semester, so staff can focus on the school turnaround plan.

### B. Parent Notification Letter

Dr. Anthony reported that the parent notification letter required by the State Board of Education had been sent to the Board by email. The letter was submitted to the Florida Department of Education, which returned revisions. Once the Board approves the letter, Wendy Ross will email it to families that afternoon. The school has assembled a team to answer family questions and to help any family that chooses to transfer to another school. Dr. Anthony will meet with staff on Friday and update the Board at the end of the week on family feedback and inquiries.

### C. School Turnaround Option Plan (TOP)

Dr. Anthony presented a high-level overview of the School Turnaround Option Plan. The draft was shared with the Board and with the School District of Osceola County for feedback. The plan has five components:

1. Stakeholder engagement, community assessment, needs analysis and root cause analysis
2. Foundations in three domains: transformational leadership, standards-based instruction and a positive learning environment
3. Capacity of leaders and educators, and support from the Board, the charter authorizer and the Bureau of School Improvement (BSI)
4. Alignment of the TOP with the School Improvement Plan (SIP), and implementation
5. Monitoring, continuous improvement and sustainability, followed by assurances and supporting documentation

*Stakeholder Engagement.* The School Advisory Committee (SAC) continues this year with expanded membership, as required for Title I. Its next meeting is September 30. Dr. Anthony asked that a Board member serve on the SAC. Staff will also recruit parent representatives and community business partners.

*Needs Assessment.* ELA achievement increased from 23% to 38%, a gain of 15 percentage points. Grade 3 reading results were especially strong. Grade 3 teachers attributed the gains to scaffolded lessons, gradual-release structures, interactive Nearpod activities and effective small groups. Mathematics and accelerating learning gains are the top priorities this year. The school's improvement goal was raised from 5 points to 15 points.

*Root Causes.* The plan identifies insufficient live instruction, weak benchmark alignment, interventions not matched in intensity to student need, limited instructional follow-up, attendance, and limited professional learning (the school had no instructional coaches last year).

*What Is Different in 2026–27.* Changes include consistent instructional expectations, targeted academic support, and collaborative planning through a new platform, Planbook EDU. They also include leadership accountability through the 4DX framework and a strong emphasis on documentation.

*Leadership and Staffing.* Dr. Anthony announced the resignation of Lori Gambino. Her position and the deputy head of school position previously held by Dr. Stokke will be posted, with turnaround experience required. These appointments will require prior approval. Planned leadership changes:

- Madison Jandrew will return to her prior role leading K–5.
- Tanya Dix will continue to lead MTSS.
- Mariana Suarez is the new testing coordinator.
- Ms. Ross's role will expand to include data and operations integrity.
- Dr. Amber Goulborn will take on an added role as Director of Academic Accountability and Programs, including academic audits.
- Dr. Katie Mullins will serve as a turnaround consultant beginning October 1.
- Dr. Bouchra Bouanani will serve as turnaround consultant
- The school is also in discussions with Instructional Empowerment to provide turnaround coaching and professional development for leaders and teachers.

*Instruction and Intervention.* The plan sets requirements for live instruction minutes at the elementary and secondary levels, with additional time for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Students will be identified for support using FAST PM1, an analysis of PM3 to PM1 results, learning gains reports, i-Ready data and classroom performance. Strategies are grounded in ESSA evidence standards.

*Positive Learning Environment.* Student engagement will be measured through participation by voice, video, polling and chat, not only by logins. It will be supported through positive behavioral incentives. A new walkthrough look-for protocol will be used to validate live instruction.

*Educator Capacity and VAM.* Under the State Board conditions, teachers with value-added model (VAM) scores rated unsatisfactory or needs improvement may not serve in instructional roles. The school is working with HR and the district on the resulting staffing changes, which will be made in the coming days.

*SIP Alignment.* The plan includes a chart aligning the TOP with the SIP. Dr. Anthony reported that the Department of Education had requested revisions to the SIP earlier that afternoon, and that she will make them promptly. Under alternative accountability, the school has four indicators: math learning gains, math learning gains of the lowest 25%, ELA learning gains, and ELA learning gains of the lowest 25%. The goal is a 15-point increase.

*Upcoming Dates.*

- October 1: TOP due
- October 9: first review with BSI
- October 14: State Board of Education meeting, 9:00 a.m., Martin County School Board office, Stuart, Florida
- October 19: on-site review at the Kissimmee office (approximately 35 visitors)

**D. Board Discussion**

Board Member Jennifer Parker asked whether leaders taking on added roles risk being, or appearing to the State Board to be, overextended. Dr. Anthony reported that she had met with each leader in the past two days, that all are committed to the work, and that added support will be provided where needed.

Ms. Gambino addressed the Board, thanking the leadership team and teachers for the opportunity to serve. The Chair thanked Ms. Gambino for her leadership.

Details on the October 14 State Board meeting and the October 19 on-site review were provided. Ms. Johns encouraged Board members to attend Kissimmee on October 19.

Dr. Anthony reported that the feedback on the TOP received so far from the district was for clarity, and that BSI indicated at a meeting on Monday that the school will have an opportunity to respond to its feedback after submission. Mr. Sternberg recommended that the Board approve the plan subject to revisions required by BSI. He advised that the revisions be shared with the Board as a redline or summary before submission, with no further ratification needed.

**IV. Action Items**

On a motion by Jennifer Parker, seconded by Jessica Howell, the Board approved the **parent notification letter** as presented. Motion carried.

On a motion by Chuck Korger, seconded by Lisa Furhmeister, the Board approved the **School Turnaround Option Plan**, subject to any revisions required by the Bureau of School Improvement. Motion carried.

## V. Committee Reports and Board Comments

Board members thanked Dr. Anthony and the school team for their work on the turnaround plan. Board Member Korger asked that, once the immediate deadlines pass, the Board receive an after-action review covering the school's business and administrative operations over the prior four years, so the Board understands how the current situation developed and can prevent a recurrence. Stevie Johns agreed. She noted that the finance team will meet with Mr. Korger, and that lessons learned will be useful to the Board ahead of charter renewal.

Dr. Anthony urged at least one Board member to attend the October 14 State Board of Education meeting in Stuart with her, noting that travel expenses will be reimbursed.

## VI. Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

## VII. Next Meeting

The next regular Board meeting was scheduled for Thursday, October 29, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Ms. Parker advised that she will not be available that day. The November meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2026.

## VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.