



VPA GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

February 20, 2025 - 2:00 pm ET

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

MEETING MINUTES

I. **Call to Order** – S. Johns commenced the meeting at 2:02pm ET

II. **Roll Call** –

Present: Stevie Johns, Board Chair; Lisa Fuhrmeister, Vice Chair; Dr. Jessica Howell

Absent for roll: Jennifer Parker

Guests: Sandra Anthony, Megan Sandoval, Ed DePersis, Steven Narcisse, Melissa Stokke-Larson, Wendy Ross, Mary Gifford, Elaine Ruiz, Lynn Fraher, Thomas Sternberg

S. Johns confirmed a quorum.

Jennifer Parker joined the meeting at 2:03 pm.

III. **Routine Business**- S. Johns

- a. A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Stevie Johns, seconded by Lisa Fuhrmeister. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. A motion to approve the January 16, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes was made by Lisa Fuhrmeister, seconded by Dr. Jessica Howell. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. **Information and Discussion Items**

State of the School Report –

Dr. Anthony welcomed guests and turned to Dr. Melissa Stokke-Larson to share this month's Mission Moments. Dr. Stokke-Larson shared Career Days at VPrep Academy which is in line with our career focus mission: to reach all students with a career focused education. At the end of our first 6-week session. Students have been visited by a



Marine, a Software Engineer, a Librarian, a Wealth Management Banker, and a Sales Manager. There is a plan to continue to expand the offerings.

Dr. Anthony shared that this month's mission moment finale was Dr. Stokke-Larson's most recent swim with the sharks.

Dr. Amber Pennington was introduced as the school's new Director of Special Programs. She was promoted to this role from her previous role as Assistant Principal. Dr. Anthony shared her excitement of this role which will include the leadership and program management of our students who have special needs, English Language Learners, students in our 504 program, and Gifted and Talented. Dr. Pennington offered her gratitude as she is entrusted in this new role and shared her excitement in working with and on behalf of all stakeholders.

Dr. Anthony introduced Mary Gifford, EVP of Business Development and New Initiatives, who presented on the proposal of a new charter opportunity: Virtual Classical Academy of Florida @Citrus. Ms. Gifford shared that the charter school movement is still robust with a great economy combined with the fact that this school is leading the way. She stated that there is a belief that a desire and need for a school with a more classical curriculum exists. We will be modeling on the classical programs that ACCEL just opened in Ohio for example, and others around the country. She shared that this charter application for grades K-8 has been written for your consideration. The proprietary curriculum is a Core Knowledge sequence, pre-2011. All of the wonderful supplemental content would be available as well. In addition, it is envisioned that the new adopted Resiliency Standards, which include the 11 pillars of character would not only be woven in nicely to the culture of the new school, but the school would be the leader in this new movement.

Ms. Gifford explained the new process which is that the application first goes to the Charter School Institute. The Institute reviews the application and makes a recommendation for approval once it is reviewed by the Charter School Review Board. The Charter School Review Board then hands it off to the County to begin the contract process. If all goes well, the school would be ready to launch in the fall with the target date of August 11 but we would be ready to make any changes to the open date as needed.

A draft resolution was prepared along with a charter agreement and Ms. Gifford invited questions from the Board. She shared that not only would ACCEL like to leverage the Board but also the board attorney, whose firm is a leader in Florida in the charter world, as it seeks to have this Board provide governance over two schools.



Dr. Howell inquired about minimum enrollment. Ms. Gifford responded that we want to ensure that offerings are well-rounded as well as ensuring the financial health of the school. Dr. Anthony and Vice President Sandoval shared that 250-300 is reasonable. 300 would be ideal to afford a content-level teacher at each grade level. Ms. Gifford shared that the company has experience working with a vendor that produces lead lists to be proactive in the school opening for the first year.

Mr. Sternberg shared that he and his firm represents the Charter Institute, and he would not be able to advise on any matters related to the application; however, he would still advise on all board related matters on this application.

Ms. Gifford shared that she works with charter authorizers across the country and she has found that this process very different working with the Charter Institute as they see it as their job to help charter applications get approved. She stated that a quality application with a good board with a strong leadership team should soon lead to a contract approval.

Mr. Sternberg offered to talk about the process as it is new. Board member Parker offered that it sounds more streamlined. The application is reviewed and recommended by FCI, Florida Charter Institute and approved and authorized by, in this case, Citrus County. The contracts are standardized and streamlined. Vice Chair Lisa Fuhrmeister shared her appreciation of the documents sent in advance and all the work that goes into this. She expressed her confidence in the team and the board members willingness to support in any way.

a. Financial Update – Ed DePersis

Mr. DePersis shared that the FY 25 enrollments and FTE's, 757. The projected weighted FTEs for FY25 to 584 was lowered to bring it in line with what was seen in FY24. The FY25 revised budget, which was approved last month, was submitted and there has not been feedback received yet from the authorizer. Payment 15 (mid-February) is still based on 771 WFTE's.

Mr. DePersis reviewed the revenue, expenses and surplus for the revised FY25 Budget as well as the cash balances, requests and AP outstanding. The Board was presented the FY25 Actuals YTD to Revised Budget numbers. He shared the FY Enrollments data as well as FY Projected Receipts and Disbursements. Given timelines for processing, there is only request remaining for the rest of the year.

Mr. DePersis reviewed the ACCEL invoice detail. There were no questions.



b. Enrollment Update – Wendy Ross

Ms Ross shared the Enrollment Update. There are currently 753 students on roll. Ms. Ross shared that she is excited about the upcoming re-enrollment season.

V. Action Items

President Johns asked for a motion to approve the **Resolution for New Charter Application for Virtual Classical Academy of Florida @Citrus 2025-2030** – Attachment A. Motion was made by Lisa Fuhmeister, seconded by Jennifer Parker. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion for Approval of **Accel Payment Request February 2025** was made by Lisa Fuhmeister, seconded by Stevie Johns. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion for Approval of **Alternate Parent Representative**, Stevie Johns was made by Lisa Fuhmeister, seconded by Jennifer Parker. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion for Approval of the **2025-2026 School Calendar** was made by Stevie Johns, seconded by Jennifer Parker. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Committees

After discussion, it was decided that the Board would limit the number of committees and create an Executive Committee. Jessica Howell shared that she felt it was important to increase board membership given size and that they are an even board. Ms. Fuhmeister affirmed Mr. Sternberg’s comments that it is good practice to have a board member who resides in the county. Dr. Anthony shared that Ms. Lynn Fraher was in attendance today who is a current parent who resides in Citrus. On a question about committee operations, Mr. Sternberg stated that each committee would be established and approved by the Board. A committee meeting with 2 or more board members would be noticed and open to the public but no public comment is provided. The committee would make recommendations back to the full Board either by email communication or placing the item on the Board agenda. The committee would engage in the work and action items would be solidified by the full board. Stevie expressed her thoughts on establishing an Executive Committee as a catch all and the Strategy Committee could focus on growth and innovation of VPrep in the state.

Approval for the **creation an Executive Committee** was made by Stevie Johns, seconded by Lisa Fuhmeister. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval for the **creation a Strategic Committee** was made by Lisa Fuhmeister, seconded by Jessica Howell. Motion carried unanimously.



Stevie Johns asked Sandy to send a poll to the board members to see which committee they are interested in serving on.

VI. Comments from the Board

Jessica Howell asked that we identify the date for the first high school graduation on the 25-26 calendar. Dr. Anthony will bring them back for the next board meeting.

Lisa Fuhrmeister asked about the follow up information and reports which the administration team was waiting for as discussed at the Board retreat. Dr. Anthony affirmed that all information and reports were received. She also shared the special, tailored training that was held for the team on Focus, school accountability and school grade projection. Dr. Anthony shared with the Board that she extended a letter of gratitude to Dr. Penaloza and her staff for that and the recent support provided related to the upcoming FTE audit.

VII. Legal – Legislative Update

Mr. Sternberg shared with the Board that there was a bill filed, beneficial to charter schools; however, it the legislature is not heavy focused on education this season and the actual sessions will begin in early March. There is a lot of action at the federal level. Mr. Sternberg commended the Board on identifying a great time to consider expanding with the Citrus application.

Next Board Meeting

As the next Board meeting is scheduled during spring break and there will not be a quorum based on board availability, the board will consider **Thursday, March 27, 2025** as the next meeting.

VIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IX. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 2:54 pm.