



Donna J. Beasley Mission Statement

To support students in achieving a high school diploma and prepare them for college and career success through an individually paced, technology-based, flexibly scheduled program.

Minutes

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at 4:00 PM at the school:

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM by the board chairman.
2. Roll Call: Mark Stichter, Walter McDonald, Robert Hurst, Mrs. Padron (board member/parent liaison), Pastor Jhon Freddy Correa. All present. Also in attendance: Ms. Peters, school assistant principal; Dr. Torregrasso, school principal; Toni Renna, consultant; Ronald Renna, consultant.
3. Welcome visitors. No visitors were present.
4. Review of Public Notice- A notice was posted on the school's website.
5. Public Comments: None.
6. Approval of the minutes from the Meetings: February 26th ZOOM and January 10th at the school. The board voted 5-0 in favor of accepting the minutes from the two previous meetings.
7. Reports:
 - a. Student enrollment: End of the year report:
 - a. Number of students at the end of the year. Dr. Torregrasso reported that we had 326 students in the FOCUS system prior to graduation.
 - b. Summer school: We have 71 students signed up for summer school. On Monday, the first day of classes, 33 were in attendance, 32 on Tuesday, and 45 today. We currently have one teacher, Ms. Peters, Dr. Torregrasso, and the school SRO working with the students. Classes are from 8:00 to 12:00. We also offer busing for our students during the summer.

Pastor Correa said that his church would offer to purchase gift cards as incentives for students. He said the school could use them as

rewards for attendance or completed work. Dr. Torregrasso and Ms. Peters will work with Pastor Correa to coordinate this. The board expressed appreciation to Pastor Correa for this offer.

- c. Projected number of students next year. Dr. Torregrasso reported that we expect to begin the year with at least 250 students. When asked why we reported 225 students to the district at the beginning of the year, he replied that of the current 326 on the books, some graduated, and some will move and not return to begin the next year, and even though he expects 250 we have always underestimated our numbers in the past. Even though we will be paid on 225 students from July 1st to approximately December 1st, we will be reimbursed by the district based on the actual number in attendance beginning in December. Mr. Renna explained to the board that they can expect monthly emails stating that our payroll is over what it should be (50% to 55% of income) because we are not being paid our total amount. He explained that this should not be a problem once our funding is adjusted.

Pastor Correa suggested that to help with enrollment next year, we place flyers in the local stores. Dr. Torregrasso said that was a good idea and that we had good relationships with local businesses, and they would take care of that.

- d. Graduation rate/numbers and ways to improve next year. There was a discussion about a conversation with the charter school office about our graduation rates being the lowest in the district. Ms. Peters explained that more students had finished their work in the last few days and that our percentage rate should be higher. She explained that the district does not consider Super Seniors in its graduation rate. The board asked what is a "Super Senior?" She explained seniors

who have been in school for five or more years are Super Seniors. The district only considers the graduation rates of the students who have been in a school for four years. Mr. Renna reported that one of the other at-risk high schools had a 40% graduation rate. He asked the district representative how they did that. He was told that they have a big marker board with every senior's (not Super Senior) name on it. They have weekly meetings to track each student's progress and keep motivating them to finish their work. Dr. Torregrasso and Ms. Peters told the board they did the same thing.

- e. Anticipated testing percentages. Dr. Torregrasso presented the following to the board regarding testing percentages:

DONNA J. BEASLEY TECHNICAL ACADEMY 2024 SPRING TESTS

BEST - WRITING GRADE 9/10

As of 4-11, we have tested 75 of 79 students, 94.9%

WIDA 67/68 tested for all 4 sections, 98.5%

FAST PM3 GRADE 9/10 As of 5-15, we have tested 77/83, 92.7%

BEST ALGEBRA (first-time test takers only) As of 5-30, 115/150, 76.6% (need to adjust for retakes)

BEST GEOMETRY (first-time test takers only) As of 5-30, 23/25, 92%

USH (first-time test takers only) As of 5-31, 32/33, 96.9%

BIOLOGY (first-time test takers only)As of 5-30, 33/36, 91.6%

He told the board that we should not have a problem with the percentage of students tested. He stated that we would not know the results of our school grades for a while as it considers students' academic progress from year to year.

- f. Discipline this year compared to previous years. Dr. Torregrasso and Ms. Peters reported that this was a rough year with discipline. Part of the problem is our increased enrollment and a space issue. They both expressed the importance of having the two security guards at the school. Pastor Correra suggested that we purchase some positive behavior posters for the walls in Faith Hall. Ms. Renna reported that we have ordered these types of posters. Ms. Peters reported that the posters are on the walls in the mental health room. It was suggested that some be moved to Faith Hall. Dr. Torregrasso and Ms. Peters said that once we have the new building, this will be part of the plan for each classroom.

- g. District update: audit, FOCUS, graduation. Audit- Joe was asked to please send Mr. Renna and the board the final audit report from the district's visit to the school.

Graduation- Ms. Peters explained that if a student hasn't finished their class work but is close to finishing, they let them "walk" at graduation, stipulating that the student must finish the work in the next few weeks. The students are given an empty folder at the time of graduation. The diploma is mailed to them once they finish the work. Mr. Stichter asked if the parents/students were aware of this. He was told yes. He asked if we had any documentation attesting to this so that a parent couldn't return later and say, "No one told me." Dr.

Torregrasso and Ms. Peters said no, but they have already addressed that concern and have developed a document that must be signed by the student and parents before they can walk for graduation.

Mr. Renna saw the report that Dr. Torregrasso had sent to the district explaining the status of each student in question. He said that two students are missing five or six classes to graduate. He asked how it is possible for a student who has had all year to do these classes to finish them in two weeks. Ms. Peters explained that the students had finished at least 80% of the classwork in each class and would be able to finish the rest in two weeks.

- b. Staffing update: End of the year report:
 - a. Number of staff at the beginning of the year: 18
 - b. Number of staff at the end of the year: 16
 - c. Who left and why? One teacher left for health reasons, and the other because her teaching certificate was revoked.
 - d. Plan to find new teachers. For the past two months, Mr. Renna has sent resumes to Dr. Torregrasso and Ms. Peters.
 - e. Teacher certification issues and plans for ESOL and certifications. Dr. Torregrasso and Ms. Peters reported that the teachers missing certification and ESOL training are working on getting them done. Dr. Torregrasso reported that they have developed a form that they will use to sit down with each teacher before school starts. The form will be filled out and signed by the teacher. Mr. Renna pointed out that Mr. Lincke has been told by Dr. Torregrasso for four years that the law requires him to be ESOL trained. Ms. Peters and Dr. Torregrasso explained that he has tried to sign up for the class, but it fills up quickly. Mr. Renna pointed out that Mr. Cox and Ms. Higgs attended a different class and took the training. Mr. Lincke should be able to do

the same. Ms. Peters said she found a website where he could sign up for the training.

Mr. Cox and Mr. Hagan are working on getting their paperwork in order.

8. Reports: Mr. Renna

- a. School purchase. Responsibilities going forward: Mr. Renna reported that the school now owns the land and buildings. He presented the closing statement to the board for their review. The final cost is \$4,261,258.35. The loan from Building Hope is \$3,518,993.75. The school had to come up with \$742,264.60. Mr. Renna reported that he had expected to have to pay \$650,000.00. He reported that he is in the process of switching over the utilities from the church to the school.
- b. Plans for buildout: Additional cost is not included.
 1. Security system in the new building. Mr. Renna will work with Clint to estimate the cost.
 2. Furniture. Mr. Renna and Dr. Torregrasso discussed trying to get free (used) furniture from the district. Mr. McDonald suggested we contact some of the area's universities to see if they had furniture that they could donate. We agreed that it was a good idea, but we did not assign anyone to do it.
 3. IT: Dr. Torregrasso has developed a wonderful relationship with the district's IT department. Over the years, they have given us used IT equipment. He reached out to his contact last week and asked for more Chromebooks. They will let him know at the beginning of July.

c. Anticipated ribbon cutting date. Mr. Renna explained that the manufactured (modular) building will be finished in three weeks. However, the site will take 4-6 months to prepare. He believes the ribbon-cutting ceremony will be in December.

Publicity: Mr. Renna mentioned that he has spoken with two companies that can help us with publicity.

d. Grow Schools- a company that will take out loans and assume responsibility for the upkeep of the buildings. Mr. Hurst, Dr. Torregrasso, and Mr. Renna met with representatives from Grow School. Mr. Hurst explained that this company would be a good backup plan if the school had trouble meeting our financial obligations. Once they present their plan to Mr. Renna, he will send it to the board for review.

c. Financials:

i. Review and approve financials for April 2024. The April financials were sent to the board last week for their review. Mr. McDonald moved to approve the April financials. Pastor Correa seconded. Vote 5-0 for approval of the financial report.

ii. Review and approve the new budget for the fiscal year.

1. Two budgets to be discussed.

Mr. Renna explained that the original plan was to give staff members raises and add pay for advanced degrees and years of experience to their current salaries. However, because the school had to pay an additional \$92,264.00 at closing, we are not able to do that this year.

Mr. Renna pointed out a few additions to this year's budget:

1. \$15,000 is in the budget to help staff with the costs of any classes or training they need. The school will reimburse staff for classes upon completion; the staff member will present documentation as to the cost, what class was taken, and the results of the class/training, at which point they will receive reimbursement.
2. The budget includes \$60,000 for hiring a fundraiser to raise money for the school. The fundraiser would receive 4% of any funds raised over their salary. In this case, the total cost to the school with insurance, etc., would be \$64,863. Any funds over that amount would determine any additional salary paid. Mr. Renna said he had reviewed a few resumes and had a Zoom meeting tomorrow with a candidate. There was a discussion about the need for this position, and it was decided that we needed to hire someone to help.

Mr. Renna asked that the budget approval be postponed until he and Dr. Torregrasso work out a few recently discovered issues. The board voted 5-0 to table the annual budget. Dr. Torregrasso and Mr. Renna will work out the final details and send it to the board for their review and approval (so you know, our contract with the district requires us to send them our annual budget no later than August 30th). This can be done officially at our next board meeting on August 28th.

d. New/Old items:

a. Fundraising update

- i. Pizza- Ms. Padron apologized to the board for being unable to accomplish this. Ms. Peters said she will work with Papa John's Pizza to implement this in October and November of 2024.

- ii. Dr. Torregrasso: luncheon/dinner event: Mr. Renna and Dr. Torregrasso discussed how they have devised a beginning plan for this event. We need a keynote speaker, a site, a date, student/parent testimonials, a list of who to invite, designing invitations, menus, cost, mailing labels, site decorations, PowerPoint presentations, etc. Mr. Hurst said he had already spoken with someone at the Gateway Golf and Country Club. He will be back in town in August and will take Dr. Torregrasso over to meet the person in charge of discussing the arrangement. Mr. Renna stated that one of the most important parts of this event would be to have a well-known speaker. He asked if anyone might have an idea. Mr. Stichter said that he had the perfect person. He said he recently attended an event where Tim Tebow was the speaker. He said he met and spoke with Mr. Tebow at the event he attended.

Everyone said that would be incredible if we could get him to come and speak. Mr. McDonald said that if we can get Mr. Tebow, he would also set up a meeting at (I missed the name) County Club. Mr. Stichter said he would contact his contact to get the information and get back to the board.

We tentative are looking to have an event in November or December.

e. New business:

- a. Election of officers for the new school year. Mr. McDonald moved to keep the same board members. Mr. Hurst seconded the motion. 5-0 to approve the same board members.

b. Principal's evaluation. Mr. Renna stated that he has been working with the district to develop a new evaluation instrument. After speaking with Dr. Larussi, it was decided that most of the evaluation should be based on the school grade, testing percentages, and graduation rates. Based on that, Mr. Renna presented the following that was sent to the board in an email last week:

1. 60% of the evaluation is based on the school grade and percentage of students tested.
2. The remaining 40%:
 - a. 5% on an evaluation instrument for teachers and staff. Mr. Renna has them fill one every year.
 - b. 5% on an evaluation instrument for parents. Unfortunately, we have not done this in the past. I sent Joe an instrument that he could use or change to ensure that we have input from the parents. It would be Joe's responsibility to get this instrument to the parents.
 - c. 5% on the individual board members' assessment of Joe. This might be difficult as many of you don't get to see the school operation. However, I believe we can come up with something that works.
 - d. 5% on the school's ability to provide the district with required reports. I spoke with the district to see if they would provide us with this information, but they declined. They suggested that we use the emails, visits, reports, and audits that they do of the school as the tool for this part of the evaluation.
 - e. 20% from the instrument we have used over the past years.

All instruments will be based on this scale:

3.6-4.0 Highly Effective

3.0-3.5 Effective

2.0-2.9 Needs Improvement

1.0-1.9 Unsatisfactory

The school grade:

Commendable: 4.0

Maintaining: 2.5

Need improvement: 1

Incomplete: 0

Percentage of students tested.

95 to 100%: 4

90% to 94%: 3

85% to 89%: 2

80% to 84%: 1

79% or less: 0

Graduation rate:

1% to 9%: 0

10% to 15%: 1

16% to 25%: 2

25% to 30%: 3

30% and above: 4

Mr. McDonald moved to accept this evaluation tool. Ms. Padron seconded. 5-0 approval vote.

- c. Annual review of the school's policies and procedure manual: The board has copies of the school's policies and procedures manual. Dr. Torregrasso stated that one update will be made to the manual. He will send that information to the board for approval at the next meeting.
- d. Approve contract for CSCSI. Two weeks ago, Mr. Renna sent a new contract for CSCSI to the board for review. CSCSI is reducing its annual fees to help the school financially. The board thanked CSCSI for doing this. Mr. Hurst suggested that, in the future, if the school is financially able, they will give CSCSI a bonus. Mr. McDonald stated that was always a possibility.

- e. Approve contract for SFS. SFS is School Financial Services, the accounting firm that we have worked with since the school opened. Ms. Padron moved to approve the contract. Mr. Hurst seconded the motion. Approved 5-0
- f. Approve contract for Audit services. Mr. Renna explained that by law, the school must get bids from 3-5 accounting/audit firms every five years. This was done, and the school is recommended to continue with the same firm (King and Walker) we have used since year one. Their bid was the lowest. Mr. Hurst moved to approve the contract with the auditing firms. Pastor Correa seconded. Approved 5-0
- g. Approve a contract with the security company for another year. Pastor Correa moved to approve the contract. Ms. Padron seconded. Approved 5-0
 - i. Staff survey about SRO and security company guards. Mr. Renna explained that Dr. Torregrasso had sent a survey to his staff regarding our SRO and security guards. He sent a copy of the teachers' input to Mr. Renna. Mr. Renna apologized to the board that when he read the teachers' comments, he contacted the Lee County Sheriff's Office and sent them the report. This created a lot of issues with their office, the SRO, and the school. Dr. Torregrasso stated that Mr. Renna should have consulted with him before sending it to them. Mr. Renna agreed that he made a mistake.

Dr. Torregrasso explained that he and Ms. Peters met with Officer Grant and reviewed the survey with him. Dr. Torregrasso stated that things would be better going forward. He stated that some of the comments made by staff were exaggerated and out of proportion to actual events. He stated that the teachers feel that the SRO and the security guard should be helping them with discipline issues in their

classrooms. Dr. Torregrasso and Ms. Peters made it clear to the staff that the SRO and security guard are NOT at the school to help them with classroom control/discipline.

Mr. Stichter asked why it got to this point. He asked if there were staff meetings during the year where teacher voiced their concerns about the SRO officer. He stated that it seemed like the SRO was blindsided when he read the surveys. Mr. Stichter suggested that the leadership team stay on top of the situation during the year and not wait until the end of the year.

- h. Establish long-range plans for
 - i. Physical facility: we are building a new 15,000 square foot building that should be finished by December 2024.
 - ii. Increasing enrollment: See item Reports: 7 c
 - iii. Increasing graduation rates and testing percentages: See Reports 7 d and e.
 - iv. Establishing fundraising plans: see item 9.
- i. All board members are up to date on training.
- f. Board Member Matters: None
- g. Set the next board meeting: The board set the following dates for the upcoming school year: August 28, November 6, February 26, and June 18.
- h. Adjournment: 6:05