

District Advisory Committee October 1, 2025, Minutes

Opening

Chairman Jennifer Marinaccio called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Ms. Jamie Haynes, school board chair; Mr. Ruben Colón, school board vice chair; Mrs. Jessie Thompson, school board member; Mr. John Cash, chief of staff; Ms. Heather Norris, ELA coordinator, TLL; Mr. Chris Carmody, Gray-Robinson; Dr. Gilbert Evans, School Board Attorney; and Ms. Danielle Johnson, communications coordinator, were all in attendance. The minutes from the September 3, 2025, DAC meeting were unanimously approved.

Superintendent Comments

Highlights listed below:

- Proud to center our efforts around the **Science of Reading**, equipping our educators with research-based best practices for reading instruction in partnership with Dr. Analexis Kennedy from the University of Central Florida.
- Launching a comprehensive professional learning initiative—starting with district and school leadership, instructional coaches, and classroom teachers. To foster a love of reading among students, we’re collaborating with local businesses and community organizations to offer exciting reading incentives.
- Incentive component includes the following partners: Jeep Beach, AdventHealth, Food Brings Hope, and the local NAACP chapters.
- Innovation is another pillar the district is focusing on. For example, Timbercrest Elementary students are engaging with AI-powered tools like Reading Progress and Reading Coach, receiving real-time fluency feedback and creating original stories through interactive AI experiences.
- At University High and River Springs Middle, students are using Prisms VR headsets to explore Algebra through immersive, real-world applications.
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs continue to thrive. Just three years ago, students earned over 2,675 industry certifications. That number has grown to over 7,000 certifications—opening doors to internships and career pathways right here in Volusia County.
- Expanding these opportunities to our elementary schools, creating a seamless pipeline from early education to career readiness.

Science of Reading [Presentation](#) – Heather Norris, Elementary ELA Coordinator

Ms. Norris shared a PowerPoint Presentation. Here are some highlights:

- The complexity of reading-motivational and engagement, technical vocabulary, multi-step process, abstract cause-effect relationships, embedded phrases and modifiers, background knowledge, familiarity genre
- The science of reading is not an ideology, a philosophy, a political agenda, a one size fits all approach, a program of instruction, a specific component if instruction – Dr. Louisa Moats
- The science of reading is “The **emerging consensus** from many related disciplines, based on literally **thousands of studies**, supported by hundreds of millions of research dollars, **conducted across the world in many**

languages. These studies have revealed a great deal about how we learn to read, what goes wrong when students don't learn, and what kind of instruction is most likely to work best for the most students." - Dr. Louisa Moats

- Active view of reading- active self regulation-word recognition-bridging processes-language comprehension-reading
- What a science of reading classroom looks like-systematic phonics instruction, purposeful deliberate practice, shift in comprehension instruction, structured text engagement, high-quality discussions.
- Role of professional learning- key principles include supportive environment, data-driven, teacher-led, evidence-based just to list a few.
- Contact information:
Heather Norris- hrnorris@volusia.k12.fl.us
386-734-7190, ext. 20570

Legislative Updates

Chris Carmody, Gray Robinson and Dr. Gilbert Evans, School Board Attorney

[Session Wrap up Gray Robinson Presentation](#)

- Chris reviewed the slides and explained how legislative session works beginning with introductions of the House of Representatives and Florida Senate. He explained special sessions, talked about total bills filed and passed.
- The entire PowerPoint presentation can be watched on YouTube from the [September 23, 1pm workshop](#).
- Slide 23-36 highlights Education Bills.
- Slide 30 outlines the criteria for Schools of Hope opportunities to co-locate with public schools in any underused, vacant, or surplus school district facility at no cost and receive facility-related services, pursuant to the State Board of Education rule.

School Board Members:

Ruben Colón: Your voice can be heard locally. Encouraged getting involved with PTA, finding out who your law makers are and contact them.

Jessie Thompson: Thank you for being here and a special thanks to the students that attended.

Jamie Haynes: Ms. Haynes spoke about how important all voices are, including the students. Last year, funding was going to be cut for CTE and advanced programs because of a misunderstanding in a category labeled "other" which was actually charter schools money spent. The State thought the money that was being spent on programs was actually money for charter schools. The student voice helped clear up the confusion.

Another concern of Ms. Haynes is regarding private and home school students receiving money and there is no accountability or assessment. It is important to know the student's growth because when they return to public schools we need to know how much has the student learned. Charter schools are held to the same accountability as public schools.

Florida PTA 2026 Legislative Conference, taking place Sunday, January 25 – Tuesday, January 27, 2026 in Tallahassee, FL.

Event Details:

- Registration Fee: \$85 per person
- Lodging: Courtyard Marriott at a discounted rate of \$199/night
- Reservation Deadline: December 25, 2025 (yes, Christmas Day, ridiculous, couldn't change it, but definitely easy to remember 😊)
- Booking Link: [Courtyard Marriott Reservation Link](#)

Cassandra "Cassie" Gonyer

561-685-1955

Adjournment

The next District Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 5**, 5:15 p.m. at Mainland High School in the multipurpose room. The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.