

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

Special Committee on the Developmental Research School Minutes February 12, 2026

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Committee Chair Jamal Brown called the Special Committee on the Developmental Research School meeting to order. Trustees Figgers, Gainey, Harris, and White were in attendance and established a quorum.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE CHARTER

Committee Chair Brown presented the Special Committee on the Developmental Research School charter for approval. He noted that the document had been included in the committee materials and called for a motion. Trustee Gainey moved approval of the charter, and Trustee Figgers seconded. The motion carried.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Chair Brown shared a comprehensive set of updates related to the legislative budget request and ongoing DRS initiatives.

Committee and Legislative Budget Updates

- He noted that students participated in the legislative session, where the University secured **\$3 million in recurring funds** for DRS.
- He explained that the legislative budget request has **two primary components**:
 - **Operational and instructional support**, including increased teacher pay, classroom supplies, facility repairs, school nurses, and incentives for teacher certifications.
 - **Academic expansion**, including enhanced dual enrollment offerings with the University, new pathways into programs of strategic emphasis, and expanded opportunities for students to enter college, technical programs, or articulated healthcare programs more quickly.
- During **DRS Day**, students met with Representatives Allison Tant and Gallop Franklin.
- Students also presented at a **Faculty Senate meeting**, where senators discussed deeper integration between DRS and University academic offerings.

External Engagement and Peer Learning

Chair Brown highlighted several ongoing efforts to strengthen DRS through external partnerships:

- Consultant firms are being evaluated.
- Engagement with peer institutions continues through conversations, site visits, and best-practice sharing.
- Visits to FAU and FSU Schools are underway, along with training opportunities at FAU's **Center for Education Strategy and Innovation (CESI)**.

He noted CESI's national recognition in 2024, including:

- #3 Best Public Elementary School in America
- #5 Best Public Middle School in America

- #31 Best Public High School in America

DRS also maintains collaborations with peer institutions such as **Tallahassee State College**, which offers a strong AA-based dual enrollment program. FAU's model was highlighted as a benchmark, as its program graduates students with bachelor's degrees and provides curriculum replication support and free monitoring services for in-state peers. FAU students are also producing published research in outlets such as the *New England Journal of Medicine* and *Leukocyte Biology*.

Discovery Engagement Update

Vice President Joe Maleszewski reported on the discovery engagement initiated by the Division of Audit in partnership with President Johnson. Funded through her carryforward authorization, the project will support the committee's charter by establishing a foundational understanding of DRS's operating environment.

He emphasized that DRS sits at the intersection of **K–12 requirements, SUS expectations, and University governance**, creating a uniquely complex oversight structure.

The Phase I engagement will:

- Assess governance, financial, compliance, operational, and legal/funding risks.
- Include interviews, document reviews, and walkthroughs.
- Run from this month through **June**, with structured deliverables such as:
 - A stakeholder and governance analysis
 - A baseline risk profile
 - An operational risk scan
 - Comparative peer reviews

The phased approach ensures the committee receives ongoing visibility into emerging themes and progress.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Vice President Jones discussed efforts to align DRS with the University's strategic plan. He outlined work to:

- Identify charter responsibilities and connect them to statutes, outcomes, and data stewardship roles.
- Establish KPIs grounded in measurable markers and aligned policies.
- Strengthen communication pathways for how data is collected, interpreted, and used to build baseline metrics.

He noted that key areas of focus—**governance structure, academic quality, partnerships, research facilities, and community engagement**—are woven throughout the emerging framework. As the charter is finalized and implemented, these elements will guide how growth and progress are measured over time.

Committee Chair Brown closed the discussion by noting his ongoing conversations with VP Tatum-Fedrick about identifying new fundraising opportunities to strengthen financial support for DRS. He also expressed appreciation to VP Weatherford for engaging in dialogue about visiting peer institutions and examining their operational models to assess how DRS might benefit from expanded research collaborations and potential pilot programs.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Committee Chair Brown adjourned the meeting.