

**Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
Board of Trustees**



**Special Committee on the FAMU DRS Meeting
Chair Brown
Thursday, September 24, 2026**

Committee Minutes

Committee Members: Trustee Brown, Chair; Trustee Harris; Trustee Figgers; Trustee Gainey; and Trustee White

Chair Brown called the meeting to order. The roll was called, and a quorum was established. The Committee received the KPMG Phase I Risk Discovery briefing and discussed recommendations to strengthen DRS governance, operations, and accountability.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

KPMG Phase I Risk Discovery Briefing

Vice President Joseph K. Maleszewski presented the KPMG Phase I Risk Discovery results for the FAMU Developmental Research School. The engagement used documents, interviews, a survey of 32 employees, and peer comparisons to assess governance, financial controls, compliance, operations, and legal and funding implications of a charter school model. He emphasized that the work was a high-level risk discovery engagement, rather than a comprehensive financial, compliance, or operational audit.

Four recurring concerns were outdated organizational charts and unclear reporting lines; staff working outside formal responsibilities and dependence on a small number of individuals; limited access to timely financial information and slow procurement; and outdated policies without consistent approval or version control.

KPMG rated financial transparency and cash handling, facilities, and emergency readiness as high-severity risks. Operating structure concerns, including paper-based purchasing, unclear roles, workload, and inconsistent policy enforcement, were rated medium severity. Particular concerns included unavailable financial reports, limited budget-to-actual visibility, and gate receipts reportedly remaining undeposited for extended periods, in some cases approaching a year, with inadequate supporting records.

VP Maleszewski described recommendations for clear governance and decision rights, current organizational information, regular financial reporting and appropriate system view access, compliant procurement workflows, timely deposits, and segregation of duties. Grant oversight concerns included one individual serving as both principal investigator and project manager. Employee survey concerns regarding facilities, access, and air quality require additional validation; emergency plans also needed updating.

The charter lab school option would require evaluation of legal authority, funding, governance, personnel, operations, and sponsor responsibilities with General Counsel and academic and

financial leadership. VP Maleszewski emphasized that University support functions share responsibility for addressing DRS risks, including executive and academic leadership, Finance and the Controller, Procurement, Technology, Human Resources, and Sponsored Programs.

DRS submitted its corrective action plan in August. No target dates had passed as of the meeting, and the Division of Audit would validate actions as they became due. University units had received the report and corrective action information to facilitate coordination. The Controller's Office had initiated cash collection training and process coordination, and Emergency Management had received a school safety briefing and discussed preparedness measures with DRS.

VP Maleszewski reviewed the complex governance structure and explained that University-wide Auditor General financial and operational audits provide limited DRS-specific coverage. Separate DRS reviews address student counts, funding, and teacher qualifications. He recommended establishing a regular cadence of financial and operational audits specific to DRS.

Special Committee Recommendations

Chair Brown presented 15 recommendations combining KPMG results and the Special Committee's work. The presentation addressed:

- A formal feasibility and implementation study of the charter lab school model; a comprehensive governance, delegation, and executive accountability framework; training for the School Advisory Board and School Advisory Council; and immediate seating and training of newly appointed advisory board members.
- Twice-annual DRS accountability reporting through Academic Affairs; a policy and internal control framework with approval authority, version control, and University alignment; and clear University ownership of compliance, audit, and corrective action responsibilities.
- Recurring financial transparency and internal control oversight led by the CFO and Controller, and modernization of University support for finance, procurement, grants, cash collections, information technology, human resources, and related functions.
- A compensation study addressing recruitment, retention, experience, certification, and competitiveness; a continuously operating College of Education program to support professional certification for DRS teachers; and Florida-aligned leadership certification practices for school and district leaders.
- A common Board-approved key performance indicator dashboard across University, school, and advisory leadership; and appointment by the President of a DRS transition and implementation officer reporting to the President to coordinate recommendations, maintain the transition plan and evidence, resolve cross-divisional barriers, track costs and risks, and report progress.

Chair Brown also emphasized recurring oversight of facilities, finances, procurement, and other operational areas, including annual financial audits and triennial operational audits.

Teacher and Leadership Certification

Dr. Benny Bolden explained temporary and professional teacher certification pathways and educational leadership and principal certification requirements. Chair Brown reported that approximately one-third of DRS faculty held professional certification, one-third temporary certification, and one-third district certification. He also raised concerns about the credentials of school leadership and the interim principal.

Chair Brown explained that limitations in professional certification constrain DRS's ability to host College of Education interns and offer certain accelerated courses. He reported that only one FAMU student was interning at DRS. Proposed dashboard measures would address academic achievement and learning gains, acceleration and dual enrollment, matriculation to FAMU, strategic emphasis, absenteeism, and credentialing.

Committee and Board Discussion

Trustee White urged the President to accelerate appointment of the transition and implementation officer and questioned the College of Education's role in addressing DRS concerns. President Johnson proposed prioritizing immediate stabilization of safety, certification, cash handling, and financial controls; evaluating the charter option; and establishing appropriate Board oversight. She noted that DRS issues span multiple committees, with audit and financial matters requiring appropriate committee reporting rather than relying solely on Academic Affairs.

Trustee Young emphasized effective leadership, monthly financial statements with clean closing schedules, and quarterly financial reviews. Trustees discussed competitive compensation, retention, organizational culture, teacher accountability, certification support, alternative certification, and apprenticeship pathways. Members stressed the need for consistent performance measures and a stronger connection between DRS, the College of Education, and the University's student pipeline.

Chair Gibbons expressed serious concerns about governance, delayed seating of advisory board appointees, leadership qualifications, financial controls, safety, and student outcomes. He requested that President Johnson provide the Board a report within 14 days describing how the issues would be addressed, how the recommendations would move forward, and who would be assigned responsibility. He emphasized the Board's fiduciary responsibility, protection of children, and quality instruction.

President Johnson acknowledged the need for accelerated action and indicated that coordination with the Commissioner of Education would be a timely priority, including alternative certification opportunities, best practices, and comparative information to guide implementation of the recommendations.

ACTION ITEMS

Minutes – Following the presentation and discussion, Chair Brown requested a motion to approve the June 11, 2026, committee meeting minutes. A motion was made and seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote without opposition.

Special Committee Recommendations – Chair Brown requested a motion to accept the 15 recommendations of the Special Committee on the FAMU DRS. A motion was made and seconded. The motion passed by voice vote without opposition, and the recommendations were approved for Board consideration.

Chair Brown thanked the Board leadership, Committee members, and President Johnson for their support and collaboration. There being no further business, Chair Brown adjourned the meeting.