

Minutes of Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, September 26, 2023
(76 Atkins Circle, Blackville, South Carolina 29817)

Board Members Present: Chairperson Terry Richardson, Ronnie Brown, Becky Huggins, SGM Abraham Sexton, and Dr. Andy Sandifer

I. Opening Business

A. Call to Order, Reflection, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, FOI Notice

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. SGM Abraham Sexton led the Reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Chair Richardson confirmed the FOI Notice, as required by the Freedom of Information Act, and recognized local media in the audience, specifically Alex Whitbeck of The People Sentinel.

Chair Richardson recognized Dr. Rachel Wall and acknowledged her pending retirement, thanking her for her service to Barnwell County schools and to him personally during her time with both Williston School District 29 and Barnwell School District 45.

B. Approval of Agenda

Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion was made by SGM Abraham Sexton to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ronnie Brown. Hearing no objections, the agenda was unanimously approved.

C. Approval of August 22, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Chair Richardson asked if there were any objections to the proposed minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. Dr. Andy Sandifer made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Ronnie Brown. The motion was approved unanimously.

II. Superintendent Report

A. Report from Career Center Task Force

Superintendent Stapleton and Dr. Rhett Richardson shared a report on behalf of the Barnwell County Career Center Task Force. Dr. Richardson explained that the task force members, made up of community and business stakeholders, have been visiting career centers across the state to gather ideas for creating a state of the art career center to serve students and the community of Barnwell County. The Task Force members include Chad Perry, Tommy Boyleston, Pickens Williams, Jr., Evelyn Coker, Andrew Bush, Becky Huggins, and Dr. Rhett Richardson. Superintendent Stapleton shared the main priorities the Task Force members are using to guide their work. These priorities include building stronger connections between business/industry and education, creating flexible spaces for program expansion, including fully-functioning farm and arena as part of the agricultural program, creating a community hub, building stronger programs to support the adult workforce and providing more effective and efficient spaces for programs at Barnwell County Career Center as well as courses offered at the three high schools in the county. The report further included detailed descriptions and

photos of spaces that would meet and support the outlined priorities.

B. Update of Strategic Planning Process for New District

Superintendent Stapleton provided an update to the board. She explained that in September she met individually with district administrators and school administrators across the two districts. In October she plans to meet with small groups of school and district leaders by department or area.

C. Update related to Consolidation Plan

Superintendent Stapleton provided detailed updates for the board regarding the Consolidation Plan. She explained the contract with SCSBA for the policy revision was finalized. The district is now officially under contract with Halligan, Mahoney, and Williams for legal services. Superintendent Stapleton shared the internal salary study will be completed in the fall and will include job descriptions, contract days and daily hours. The proposed schedules are being created based on comparability studies with other districts within the state. She explained collaborative meetings with current staff across the two districts started in September. Facility study visits in Blackville and Williston have concluded, and the engineering and Architect teams are compiling their findings in a report to be shared in October. An analysis of safety and security software and equipment has started and includes review of cameras, equipment, ID entry and software programs. Facilities needs are also being determined. Additionally, Superintendent Stapleton explained an employer identification number from the IRS has been assigned along with an identification number from SAM.gov. The CFO is currently completing Requests for Proposals for Banking and Insurance services. A new website is in the process of being created. Lastly, she explained the new district's Application Web Portal through the State Department of Education was being worked on, as well.

III. Old Business

A. Second Reading and Approval of Board Policy BEDH Public Participation at Meetings – Action Item

Chairperson Richardson asked for a motion to approve the Second Reading of Policy BEDH. SGM Abraham Sexton made the motion which was seconded by Ms. Becky Huggins. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. New Business

A. First Reading of Board Policy BD Organization of the School Board – Action Item

Chairperson Richardson requested this policy be tabled until the October work session. The superintendent indicated that could be done. No additional discussion followed.

B. Approval of International Trip to London in 2025 – Action Item

Superintendent Stapleton shared David Edwards, Theatre Teacher for the Barnwell County Consolidated School District, submitted a request for an international field experience in London for June of 2025. By approving this now, it would allow Mr. Edwards to begin fundraising now to keep monthly costs low. She referenced the detailed itinerary included in the board members' packets. A discussion followed with Chairperson Richardson asking details about payment responsibilities. Superintendent Stapleton explained the trip would be funded through fundraisers and remaining balances would be the responsibilities of the students and families. Additionally, it was

confirmed participation in the trip would primarily focus on students involved in the drama program but would be available for all interested high school students in the county. Ms. Becky Huggins made a motion to approve the trip. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Approval of Board Meeting Dates 2023-2024 – Action Item

Dr. Andy Sandifer made a motion to approve the meeting dates. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Approval of Board Work Session and Training Day – Action Item

Please note this discussion took place slightly out of order. Chairperson questioned if the proposed date and time would work for all members. Mr. Ronnie Brown explained he could not attend the proposed morning meeting but could be available later in the day. It was agreed the Superintendent would touch base through email and confirm a time that would work for everyone following the meeting.

V. Executive Session

Chairperson Terry Richardson explained there was a need for an executive session for the purpose of *Discussion of Employment and Appointment, specifically District Leadership Positions*. Ms. Becky Huggins made a motion to go into executive session.

The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton and approved unanimously.

Dr. Andy Sandifer made a motion to return to open session. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. After returning to open session, no action was taken.

VI. Adjournment

A. Announcement of Next Meeting (Discussed earlier in the meeting.)

B. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Andy Sandifer made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 7:46pm.