

**Minutes of Barnwell County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, February 27, 2024
(76 Atkins Circle, Blackville, South Carolina 29817)**

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

I. Opening Business

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

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Chair Richardson thanked the visitors in the audience. 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.
- Approval of Agenda – Chair Terry Richardson

A motion was made by Dr. Andy Sandifer to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. Hearing no objections, the agenda was unanimously approved.
- Approval of January 19, 2024 Board Work Session Minutes – Chair Terry Richardson

A motion was made by SGM Abraham Sexton to approve the January 19, 2024 Work Session Minutes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Andy Sandifer. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- Approval of the January 23, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes- Chair Terry Richardson

A motion was made by SGM Abraham Sexton to approve the January 23, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Becky Huggins. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- There was no public participation.

II. Superintendent Report –Dr. Crystal Stapleton

Dr. Stapleton shared the following updates:

- A. Update regarding Facility Plan- Phase II

Dr. Stapleton provided an update regarding Phase II of the Facility Plan.

- Phase II called for a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural/Engineering Services and a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Construction Management At-Risk Services. These were advertised January 26th and due February 12th.
- Phase II called for a district committee to conduct the bid opening and narrow down proposals to a “shortlist of firms” for interviews. The board members will choose from these firms in securing services. The short list was published February 23rd. The presentations and interviews will take place Friday, March 8th.
- Dr. Stapleton explained that, during the presentation and interview, the firms have been asked to address the following items.
 - Safety record and safety plan.
 - Experience working with small rural school districts with limited funding.
 - Strategies for utilizing local vendors and positively impacting the local community.
 - Cost-saving measures to efficiently manage the district’s budget while maintaining quality.
 - Detailed communication plans from planning, design, and construction to project completion.

Each presentation is allotted 30 minutes, with an additional 10-15 minutes for questions from the board members at the end. Dr. Stapleton asked the board members, if there’s anything else that they would like the district to have the candidates prepared to address, please let us know.

- FEMA Grant- Safe House and Gymnasium being funded with FEMA money

Dr. Stapleton explained that, since the building permit was issued approximately 2.5 years ago, the district will need to follow the guidelines as provided in the Office of School Facilities (OSF) Guidebook.

She shared the following excerpt from the 2023 OSF Guidebook:

If advertising is delayed longer than six months after initial approval of construction documents by the OSF, the design professional must request in writing a new permission to advertise. The design professional must certify that no changes have been made to the original contract documents or must resubmit revised contract documents for review and approval.

Tetra Tech is currently conducting a thorough review of all plans for code issues. During the OSF review, Tetra Tech will be reengaging with agencies that had been identified previously, including but not limited to SCDOT, Fire Marshal, and the City of Barnwell.

Timeline: The Tetra Tech Project Manager predicts early to mid-April being able to release the RFP and mid-May as the timeframe for opening bids. Dr. Stapleton explained that the district would give longer than 2 weeks because the extent of the request.

Chair Richardson asked if this project is under Barnwell School District 45? Dr. Stapleton explained that it was when the project was started, however we are working to change the name to Barnwell County School District. At the time it is bid out and begun to be built, it will be under the advisement of the transition board. Dr. Stapleton explained that, when the district chooses the construction company, the transition board would be making that decision.

Chair Richardson asked is any link between this construction company and the construction company that we are discussing on March 8th? Dr. Stapleton stated that there could be. She explained that another firm would not oversee this project because Tetra Tech already is, but it could be the same construction company that is chosen in the end to do the actual construction work.

Dr. Stapleton explained that the architectural and building plans have been done. The district is now in the phase of having someone build it.

Ronald Brown asked, because this was a Barnwell School District 45 project, have we spoke to our attorney to see how this is going to coincide with the current board. Dr. Stapleton explained that this board would be the one that the bids would be brought to because of the completion time. She explained that district is actually the sub-recipient under SC Emergency Management, and there was a major partnership between the district and the county as the facility will serve dual purposes. It will be a gymnasium utilized by the school district, but it will also be a safe house for Barnwell County.

B. Update related to Barnwell County School District Consolidation Plan

Dr. Stapleton gave the following updates regarding the Consolidation Plan:

- Quotes from insurance companies have been received for property and casualty insurance and SCBIT has been named as the insurance company for BCSD beginning July 1, 2024. Finance and Operations will continue to work with SCSBIT to make sure there is a smooth transition.
- Finance has started the process with PEBA to transfer all current employees from all districts to the new district on July 1, 2024. The CFO has sent in the initial paperwork to establish our district code for insurance and retirement. PEBA has asked each district (45, 48, 80) to upload a roster of current employees to them no later than May 1, 2024. The CFO will continue to monitor to make sure this deadline is met.
- Our CFO has met with SmartFusion to start the process of setting up the new

district. SmartFusion is the comprehensive School Financial management software system that brings together all the data conveniently in one place.

- Our CFO has started on the budget for 24-25 by pulling the current budgets from all three districts to begin the process of what will be combined and determining if any additional RFPs need to go out to combine services.
- In March, the Superintendent and CFO will be completing the collaborative budget process by setting up meetings with each department head and principal to discuss their locations and budget needs for the 2024-2025 school year. This is a critical step prior to bringing a proposed budget to the Board for approval. We will look at where their general fund budget is this year and what it will be next year based on their needs and how the funds for their schools or departments will be allocated. Principals will determine their five biggest needs as far as needs for their facilities. We want to at least try to fund their top three. That is a critical step for us prior to bringing the budget to you for approval.
- The IT departments have been meeting regularly. Most recently, representatives from both districts met to discuss IT needs - specifically online enrollment applications, PowerSchool, and the new website. The PowerSchool meetings for the transition of our data systems are still occurring weekly. There is an official Barnwell County PowerSchool database now.
- Mike Beasley, Director of Operations, has met for collaborative meetings in his Department.
 - He led a collaborative meeting with all maintenance supervisors from both districts to discuss needs moving forward, summer cleaning/maintenance, guidelines, and expectations.
 - The transportation supervisors have met multiple times to coordinate operations, revise handbooks, and more for the new district so that they can be advertised.
- Pierson Collective was on site to get footage for a recruitment video. They are going to create some short videos that we can use in different ways. Dr. Stapleton shared that it was very exciting to go around to the different districts and get different footage that we can utilize. The interviews were about the heart of our community.

III. **Old Business**

- Update regarding School Choice Process
 - The board previously approved the application and guidelines for the new district's School Choice option. During the application process, the district will be able to determine the enrollment numbers to ensure there is room for students/families requesting intra-district transfers. Dr. Stapleton explained that

the district will need time to look at any adjustments that will need to be made for district transfers.

Chair Richardson asked how is the information being communicated to parents? Dr. Stapleton explained that it will be shared on the website, and schools will share the information utilizing their communication modes. For example, Barnwell Primary School uses Remind 101, so they will send it out through that.

- Ronald Brown stated that it has been mentioned that transportation would be provided and asked if anyone has discussed how that would work? Dr. Stapleton explained, as part of the consolidation efforts, state officials said they would work with the new district to help provide bus transportation for children attending schools outside their regular attendance area, should families need to use that transportation option. She explained that providing transportation would be contingent upon assistance from the State. She stated that, if she receives any additional information, she will update the Board, but the district is not putting on the application that transportation will be provided.
- Update regarding the new 2024-2025 Programs- Barber/Master Hair and Child Development
 - We are moving forward with adding a Barber/Master Hair Care program at BHHS next year that will be open to all students in the county. Principal Snider showed us the classroom that can be used for that program for the 2024-2025 school year.

Chair Richardson asked about the number of students already showing interest. Dr. Stapleton explained that there was currently not a count because the high school would be advertising. She explained that, when a number is available, it will be shared with the board.

- The Barber Instructor position was posted on TalentEd where our job openings are posted, and the application closes Thursday.

Dr. Andy Sandifer asked there are many barbers interested? Dr. Stapleton stated that as of today, there was one applicant.

- Dr. Stapleton shared that a district team would be visiting the career center in Lexington 2 on March 15th to see their Barber/Master Hair program.
- Dr. Stapleton also explained that the district is moving forward with plans to add an Early Childhood Education pathway for the 2024-2025 school year.
- Dr. Stapleton shared that a district team would be visiting the career center in Orangeburg on March 21st to see their Child Development Program.
- Blackville-Hilda High School has a space which already meets the room criteria for Child Development Program.

Chair Richardson asked if Orangeburg's program would be identical to what we are envisioning doing here? Dr. Stapleton explained that it would be similar, because the district would be utilizing the same standards.

Chair Richardson asked about the capacity of the room. Dr. Stapleton stated that we were waiting to see what the interest would be. Currently, we could accommodate 16 barber students with a pair at each station. Our hope that everyone interested would be able to attend, but we will continue to monitor the numbers.

Ronald Brown asked if there are standards required per barber station. Dr. Stapleton explained that there are, and the district is planning on the new instructor to help with the equipment to be ordered as an expert in that field. She also stated that visiting Lexington 2's barber program will help with that as well, but there are certain requirements as to what has to be at each station.

- On Friday, February 16th, representatives from the primary/elementary schools across the county, the two curriculum departments, and Dr. Stapleton visited early childhood programs at Barnwell Primary School, Macedonia Elementary/Middle School, and Kelly Edwards Elementary School.

Dr. Stapleton shared a video of the day's visits.

After watching a brief video of the visits to the early childhood programs across the county, Chair Richardson asked about a row of cribs that were seen. Dr. Stapleton explained that there were no children in that part of the video, but it was a child development classroom at Kelly Edwards. That particular child development room is run by First Steps. It gives an insight into why it's so important to look at what we're doing in our early childhood program and what some of the priorities are moving forward.

One of the takeaways from that day is coming back together and discussing the expansions for next year.

- Our Chief Academic Officer, Debra McCord, has confirmed with the State Department that we may have a multiage Montessori classroom as an expansion of the CERDEP programs currently in place.
- BSD45 has requested from the state funding for an additional CERDEP classroom that would serve both 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. This is pending funding approval. This classroom would use the Montessori approach as their curriculum and serve ten 4-year-olds and ten other multi-age students (students either 3 or 5 years old).
- BCCSD expanded their CERDEP programs at Macedonia Elementary/Middle

School in the fall. This additional classroom would continue to operate and serve students.

Chair Richardson asked why are parents not bringing their children to these programs? Dr. Stapleton explained that she feels it may be because it's not a requirement. She explained that the district strongly encourages preschool programs, and you also have some students that go to private programs, other pre-school daycare programs, or some that do not attend a program at all. She explained that the district is trying to recruit whether it's at church or a baseball field. She also shared that an early childhood team had a meeting in December where representatives across the districts shared their recruitment ideas.

Dr. Andy Sandifer asked if there was currently a Montessori program in Blackville? Dr. Stapleton explained that there was not one right now, but they are looking right now to see if next year there may be a Montessori approach within their CERDEP classroom. He asked how many years would a student be enrolled in Montessori? Dr. Stapleton explained that they are there for three years (3,4, and 5 year olds), but there is an option at Barnwell Primary School to continue on to a first and second grade Montessori class. There are some that choose to continue the Montessori path and some that choose to go into the traditional classroom. That would be a family or personal decision as to what you choose. She explained that, if we start the CERDEP class in the fall with the Montessori approach, it will be the first in Blackville and Williston. Dr. Sandifer said his hat goes off to the teachers in child development. He asked how many people are staffed in one Montessori classroom? Dr. Stapleton replied that there is a teacher and an aide in each class, and the 3 year olds stay for a half day. Dr. Andy Sandifer asked if the same teacher and aid stays with the same child all three years, and Dr. Stapleton replied yes.

Ronald Brown stated that his question was what was the timeframe because at one point 3 and 4 year olds were attending half a day. Some would come in the morning and some in the afternoon. Dr. Stapleton replied that currently the 3 year olds stay a half a day and the other children in Montessori stay a full day, but it depends on how you set it up.

Dr. Andy Sandifer asked if head start was still in the picture? Dr. Stapleton replied that there is a head start program housed at Macedonia in Blackville. The principal provides space for them so that they can operate on campus.

Ronald Brown asked if there was an overflow of 3 year olds, could half come in the AM and half in the PM? Dr. Stapleton stated that there are activities that are done with the 3 year olds, and then there are lessons and activities that are done once the 3 year olds leave in the afternoon. She explained that the district tries to look at the possibility of having another classroom versus having a morning and afternoon session, but that would all depend on if there were

waiting lists for multiple ages. Aerial Baxley is employed with Barnwell 45, but is funded by Darnell which is a countywide organization. Dr. Stapleton explained that she has a lot of collaboration within the county, and she has focused on expanding the preschool programs.

Becky Huggins asked if transportation is still just provided for 4 year olds, not 3 year olds? Dr. Stapleton replied yes, and stated that it does limit what we are able to do with the 3 year olds.

Chair Richardson stated that the board appreciates Debra McCord, Aerial Baxley, Dr. Stapleton and everyone involved. We realize that it is very challenging.

SGM Abraham Sexton asked if there was an aid or someone other than the driver on the bus with the 4 year olds? Dr. Stapleton replied that the 4 year olds are not on a separate bus and they are with the normal transportation. You have an aid that takes them out to the bus, and we try to be careful where they're seated on the bus.

Dr. Stapleton shared the following information on 2024 Instructional Materials adoption:

- After attending the Instructional Materials Caravan, ELA representatives from across the county met together to determine the ELA materials for the newest adoption.
- The materials were chosen from materials already by the State Department of Education.
- Materials were chosen as grade spans (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), and teacher representatives from each different level across the county participated in the caravan and the decision-making process.
- Language Arts, K-5 –South Carolina Wonders
English Language Arts, 6-8- South Carolina StudySync, 6-8
Language Arts- HMH Into List
Handwriting, Grades K and 3- Zaner-Bloser Handwriting

IV. New Business

A. Approval of New English Language Arts 2024 Instructional Materials Adoption

- (Action) Motion was made to approve New English Language Arts Instructional Materials
- Motion made by Dr. Andy Sandifer and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. Approval of Second Reading and Approval of Policies

Dr. Stapleton presented the second reading of the following policies:

Policies Category C

General School Administration

- Policy CA - Administration Goals/ Priority Objectives - This policy establishes the district's administrative goals and objectives.
- Policy CB - School Superintendent - This policy establishes the board's vision.
- Policy CBA - Qualifications of Superintendent - This policy establishes the basic structure for the qualifications of the superintendent.
- Policy CBC - Superintendent's Duties and Responsibilities - This policy establishes the basic structure for the duties of the superintendent.
- Policy CBD - Superintendent's Contract - This policy establishes the basic structure for the contractual relationship between the board and the superintendent. It includes a section on the board's annual review of the superintendent's contract.
- Policy CBI - Evaluation of Superintendent - This policy establishes the basic structure for board evaluation of the superintendent that ensures board accountability to the community. It includes a statement on adjustments to the superintendent's contract and rate of compensation.
- Policy CC - Administrative Organization - This policy establishes the basic structure for the administrative organization of the district.
- Policy CCB - Line and Staff Relations - This policy establishes the basic structure for lines of authority within the district.
- Policy CFA - School Principals/ Building Administrators - This policy establishes the basic structure for the administrative operation of the schools.
- Policy CFC - Assignment and Transfer of School Administrators - This policy establishes the basic structure for the assignment and transfer of school administrators.
- Policy CH - Policy Implementation - This policy establishes both the vision and the basic structure for implementation of board policy.
- Policy CM - School District Annual Reports - This policy establishes the basic structure for issuing annual reports. It includes a section on making the annual reports available to the public.

• Policies Category D

Fiscal Management

- Policy DA - Fiscal Management Goals and Objectives - This policy establishes the board's vision for the sound fiscal management of the district.
- Policy DB - Annual Budget - This policy establishes the basic structure of the annual budget.
- Policy DC - Taxing and Borrowing - This policy establishes the basic structure for the board's authority to tax and borrow funds for the maintenance and operation of the district.
- Policy DD - Funding Proposals, Grants, and Special Projects - This policy establishes the basic structure for the seeking of additional sources of revenue for the district.
- Policy DFAC - Fund Balance - This policy establishes the basic structure for maintaining an appropriate fund balance.

(Action) Motion was made to approve Second Reading of Policies- Section C

Motion made SGM Abraham Sexton and seconded by Becky Huggins

(Action) Motion made to approve Second Reading of Policies- Section D

Motion made by Becky Huggins and seconded by Dr. Andy Sandifer

C. First Reading of Policies

Dr. Stapleton presented the first reading of the following policies:

Policies Category D

Fiscal Management

- Policy DBJ- Budget Transfers- This policy establishes the basic structure for budget transfers.
- Policy DDA, DDA-R- Federal Fiscal Compliance- This policy establishes the basic structure for ensuring federal funds received by the district directly or as a subrecipient are administered in accordance with all federal requirements, including the Uniform Grant Guidance, state, and local law.
- Policy DDB, DDB-R- Online Fundraising Campaigns/Crowdfunding- This policy establishes the basic structure for online fundraising campaigns and crowdfunding.
- Policy DFG- Tuition Income- This policy establishes the basic structure for collection of tuition from nonresident students.

- Policy DGA- Authorized Signatures- This policy establishes the basic structure for the signing of checks drawn on district and school accounts.

Ronald Brown asked why is the chair authorized to sign checks in the absence of the superintendent if there is a designee. Dr. Stapleton stated that an additional statement could be added that the board be made aware of what he/she has signed. Ronald Brown stated that he feels that if the chair is placed in the position of signing a check, the board should be made aware of what is being signed. Dr. Stapleton stated that two different options will be provided for the board to look at to decide on before the second reading and approval.

- Policy DGD- Credit Card Use- This policy establishes the basic structure for credit card use and the rules governing their use.
- Policy DHA- Contracting Authority- This policy establishes the basic structure for the district's contracting authority allowing the superintendent to act as directed by the board.
- Policy DID- Inventories/Fixed Assets- This policy establishes the basic structure for the accurate inventory of district property.
- Policy DJ, DJ-R- Purchasing- This policy establishes the basic structure for the expenditure of district funds. The rule is the updated procurement code from the SCDE.
- Policy DJGA- Sales Calls and Demonstrations- This policy establishes the basic structure for calls on district staff.
- Policy DK- Payment Procedures- This policy establishes the basic structure for payment of district obligations.
- Policy DKA- Payroll Procedures/Schedules- This policy establishes the basic structure for payment of salaries to district staff members.
- Policy DKC- Expense Authorization/Reimbursement- This policy establishes the basic structure for authorizing and reimbursing expenses for district employees and board members.
- Policy DM- Cash in Buildings- This policy establishes the basic structure for dealing with and accounting for cash in school buildings.

(Action) Motion made to approve First Reading of Policies- Section D

Motion made by Becky Huggins and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Executive Session

No need for Executive Session

E. Adjournment

A. Announcement of Next Meeting

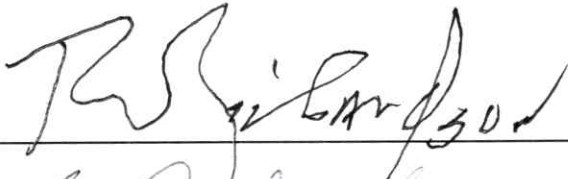
- Firm Presentations and Interviews- March 8, 2024 at Barnwell Schools Administration Building
- March Board Meeting- March 26, 2024

B. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Dr. Andy Sandifer and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Thanks to Mrs. Augustine for providing sweet treats to the school board.

Chair



Clerk

