

**SCSDB BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF MEETING
December 12, 2023**

The regular meeting of the SCSDB Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. in the BB&T Board Room in Walker Hall on the SCSDB campus, Spartanburg, South Carolina. Chairman Brawley called the meeting to order and stated that proper notification of the meeting had been made according to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. Chairman Brawley allowed for the introduction of staff and board members in attendance and gave a special welcome back and congratulation to Cindy Holland who was reappointed to the board.

MEMBERS PRESENT

W. Scott Brawley, Chairman
Phyllis H. Alexander, Secretary
Edward B. Bible
Andrew Dobson, Vice Chairman
David J. Gundling
Cindy Holland
Robin Price
Dr. Steven R. Ross

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Jolene Madison
Mary Hayes
Scott Ramsey
Kristy Harding
John Reynolds
Ben Riddle
Logen Belmont
Sam Hooks

MEMBER ABSENT

Deb Blickenstaff, Ex-Officio/SCDE
Tara P. Carroll, Ex-Officio/SCDHEC

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Julie Bible
Kristin Barber

WELCOME

Chairman Brawley welcomed the committee members and SCSDB staff who were participating in the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 08, 2023 SCSDB Board of Commissioners meeting, corrected to reflect Andrew Dobson as Vice Chairman was made by David J. Gundling and seconded by Andrew Dobson. The minutes were unanimously approved with the correction.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Madison opened her report with a first semester update. She reported that the Applied Academic Center had obtained a new forklift simulator that allowed students learn how to operate a forklift in a work environment. She also reported that the Applied Academic Center obtained a new embroidery machine and requested that the board members open their Christmas gifts, sharing that the students had done the embroidery work on their gifts. She also reported that the Applied Academic Center is currently raising funds for a new greenhouse in order to expand the hydroponics program. President Madison updated the board on changes to the food services program operated by Sodexo and informed the board of the improvements that are being made to the quality of the food that students are receiving while on campus. She informed the board that the new chef had vast experience and had come to SCSDB from the food service program at BMW. She also shared that

our nursing staff are working with the nutritionist from Sodexo to make sure our students are receiving a balanced diet. President Madison informed the board that the SCSDB Homecoming festivities were a success and that the students really enjoyed Spirit Week and the Pep Rally. Mr. Reynolds added that about 10% of the students stayed over the homecoming weekend, and President Madison reported that she hoped that number would grow in the future as enrollment increases. President Madison reported that the School for the Blind had a new chemistry lab complete with the latest technology that included talking beakers and microscopes with the ability to cast images to student electronic devices, the smart boards, and to the embosser to allow blind students tactile opportunities. She also reported the School for the Blind had a successful White Cane Day that provided confidence-boosting opportunities for blind students. President Madison informed the board that SCSDB hosted a Public Safety Workers Day and that the students really enjoyed interacting with Public Safety Personnel and their equipment. President Madison also informed the board that the Cedar Springs McDonalds had expressed interest in hosting an ASL-only night and that they also hosted a Halloween night for the students. She reported that residential life hosted a Trunk or Treat on campus for the students supported by the local community including Converse University. President Madison reported that Cedar Springs Academy held a successful science fair, and she also updated the board on the success of the deaf middle schools Ninja Robotics Team, including that the team had developed an underwater robot that they could now use in the newly opened pool. She stated that SCSDB maintains a great relationship with both AIDB and NTID, and that SCSDB students participated in the space camp at AIDB. She also shared that SCSDB would be hosting a STEM camp in partnership with AIDB for the southeast region. She also shared that students enjoyed a presentation from the first deaf woman and the first deaf American to reach the summit of Mount Everest. President Madison also reported to the board of the successes of SCSDB Social Media presence under the direction of Logen Belmont and made them aware of the new outdoor advertising billboard located on Hwy. 56 showing both a historic and modern-day view of SCSDB. The board was also informed of the target market for the social media campaign. President Madison also informed the board that SCSDB was in the process of having another bus wrapped with the SCSDB story to be used as a rolling advertisement for the school. In conclusion, President Madison outline the calendar of events surrounding the 175 year celebration.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Riddle reviewed the financial information that had been mailed to the board prior to the meeting (see attachment #2 to the December 12, 2023 agenda).

LEGISLATIVE/OPERATIONS UPDATE

Mr. Ramsey gave made the board aware of the upcoming SC House Ways and Means Budget Subcommittee Hearing scheduled in January. He then updated the board on a building and grounds matter concerning the magnolia trees in front of Walker Hall and made them aware that he had consulted with the South Carolina State Forester to help maintain the health of the trees.

SCSDB FOUNDATION UPDATE

Mr. Hook thanked the entire board for their leadership and reported that the foundation had celebrated three ribbon cuttings with the refurbishment of the bowling alley, the blind school chemistry lab and the classroom libraries. He also informed the board that the foundation currently had five projects ongoing that included installation of sensory rooms in each school and the library, construction of a natural playground, greenhouse project, robotics team project and refurbishment of the deaf school science lab. Mr. Hook concluded by sharing that the Spartanburg Lion's Club just celebrated their 89th Christmas luncheon on the SCSDB campus and that the Lions had provided a pizza party for the students and provided each student with a Christmas gift.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Mr. Reynolds, on behalf of the Principals wished the board a happy holiday season.

Mr. Bible asked if the Vision Institute was affecting the SCSDB Outreach Program to which President Madison reinforced the idea of partnerships among all student services agencies leading to a positive impact on the students.

Mr. Bible raised concern over making sure appropriate technology is being utilized for blind students to help prepare them for the future to which President Madison assured the board that the students at SCSDB are being prepared with the appropriate life skills and technology skills to be successful.

Mrs. Price asked if a list existed identifying all blind students in the state that SCSDB could utilize to make sure no students were falling through the cracks. Mrs. Madison explained how the SDE collects the information from the districts and the confidentiality involved.

Chairman Brawley reminded the board members of the next meeting in March and that it would take place in the Columbia Outreach Center.

Upon the motion of Mrs. Price and second by Mr. Dobson, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Scott Brawley, Chairman

Phyllis H. Alexander, Secretary