

**Minutes of Barnwell County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, March 26, 2024
(5214 Reynolds Road, Blackville, SC 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. Ronnie Brown led the Reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Chair Richardson confirmed the FOI Notice, as required by the Freedom of Information Act. The Chair recognized the press for all the awards they received recently for their reporting.

- 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 February 27, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes – Chair Terry Richardson

A motion was made by SGM Abraham Sexton to approve the February 27, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Becky Huggins. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- Approval of the March 8, 2024 Special-Called Board Meeting Minutes- Chair Terry Richardson

A motion was made by Ronnie Brown to approve the March 8, 2024 Special-Called Board Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. 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

- We are currently in Phase II. At the close of the special-called meeting on March 8th, the Board approved unanimously for the superintendent to enter into negotiations with:

- SSOE as our Architect/Engineering firm
- HG Reynolds for our Construction Management at Risk Services

We are currently in contract negotiations and have had initial meetings to discuss the scope of work. Since we met on March 8th, there has been several meetings to move on to Phase II.

- The \$105 million from Savannah River Settlement Funding has been approved for release to the school district. We are expecting it any day now. The CFO and Superintendent met with First Citizens on Monday of this week to discuss options moving forward. There is a follow-up meeting scheduled for April 9th to have portfolio and investment options presented.
- Tetra Tech is working with OSF to reopen the FEMA Grant- Safe House and Gymnasium proposal to bid that out. Since the building permit was issued approximately 2.5 years ago, the Office of School Facilities (OSF) requires the design professional to certify that no changes have been made to the original contract documents or to 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. Our Tetra Tech Project Manager predicts early to mid-April being able to release the RFP and mid-May as the timeframe for opening bids.

B. Update regarding Barnwell County School District Consolidation Plan

- The athletic directors, principals, and district personnel met again to review and equalize athletic supplements for the 2024-2025 school year.
- For online enrollment, the new district will have a new online registration portal called Final Forms. A countywide team came together to look at this new option for online registration. IT is working now with all schools and stakeholder groups as we build these new forms.
- Our IT Departments have been working collaboratively on many tasks as we move forward:
 - Working with Google two-way sync
 - Working collaboratively with the Transportation departments to consolidate Traversa services which is our badge system for the buses.
 - Ordering needed equipment for equalizing technology districtwide- Ex. new network switches for Williston and new firewall, network switches, and

wireless access points for the career center. We are looking at how many security cameras we have in each building to make sure we have equitable resources.

- Has been working on consolidating our Internet services into one- July 1st is the live date with the new Internet circuit countywide.
- Have purchased and licensed new services countywide for Securly, our Chromebook filtering.
- Our new Special Services Department has been meeting with each other bi-monthly and working on many tasks as we move forward:
 - Completed needs assessments across both districts (including curriculum, assessment materials, equipment needs, and areas of improvement)
 - Compiled joint list of needs; working to prioritize and determine the order in which they are assessed.
 - Gathered student projections from both districts to look at numbers and classes for next year
 - Started analyzing student-level SPED data
 - In the process of applying for a NPI number for the new consolidated school district for Medicaid billing
- Interviews are happening countywide for positions open for the 2024-2025 school year. The Special Services Department is conducting joint interviews to replace SPED staff. Other interviews are happening by location.
- The Special Services Department has begun EDPlan SC training. First training was March 18th in Barnwell. Second training is scheduled for April 8th in Blackville.
- The nurses from both districts are meeting in person on March 27th.

Dr. Sandifer asked how many nurses there and asked about their degree levels. Dr. Stapleton shared the number of nurses per district and explained that at the Career Center they utilize their health science teachers to help in that capacity if there's an emergency. Dr. Stapleton replied that they are all RNs, so we are very fortunate.

Ronnie Brown asked if the district has a lead nurse. Dr. Stapleton stated that has been discussed but no one has been named at this time. She also explained that the district has set aside a stipend, so we can have a lead nurse to help disseminate information. She explained that our nurses will fall under our Student Services department, and Leah Bias will be their contact at the district level.

- Our finance departments continue to meet collaboratively to finalize finance procedures and training opportunities for the bookkeepers.
- Throughout March, we have been completing our collaborative budget process by meeting with each department head and principal to discuss their budgetary needs for the 2024-2025 school year. This is a critical step prior to bringing a proposed budget to the Board for approval. Principals have also shared during this process their top 5 facility priorities. We are seeing how many we can fit them into the budget as we plan it.
- There was a question from the public: “Dr. Stapleton, you discussed the \$105 million from the Savannah River settlement, but have you applied for the additional \$50 million from the state?” Dr. Stapleton asked Chair Richardson if she was allowed to answer the question, and he replied yes. Dr. Stapleton stated we have been talking to the state about trying to allocated some of that for Barnwell County, but we do not have a definite amount nor do we have a confirmation in writing. It is on their radar and they have us listed as a priority. Barnwell County is the only county this year that is having to go through a forced consolidation, so we are hoping to be considered for some of that money.

Career and Technology Programs

- A team visited the barber program at Lexington 2 and the child development program in Orangeburg. As of yesterday, the interest from high school students was 34 for the barber program and 24 for the child development program. In Executive Session, I will be bringing to you a candidate for your approval for the barber instructor. Once we finalize that, we will be moving into purchasing the equipment.

School of Choice

- Our School Choice application opened March 12th and will remain open until 11:59 pm on April 7th. We will send another reminder this week.
- Our new website is live at BCSD.net. We are putting all information there for the new district, including facility updates, the School of Choice application, any policies that you are reviewing or have already approved, and general district information.

III. **Old Business**

Chair Richardson asked if there was any old business, and Dr. Stapleton replied that all that was shared in the updates.

IV. **New Business**

A. Approval of Retention Bonus for BCSD

- Dr. Stapleton presented a proposed retention bonus for \$1000 to all employees, both certified and classified. She explained that this will be advertised when contracts are sent out, but it will be paid after school begins in August.

Dr. Stapleton explained the following:

- To fund this, we are currently building the budget, and we are trying to include it in the general fund budget that we will presenting. We may have to use consolidation funds to balance this. Another option is to fund the bonus through savings in the budget and overage in revenues, but that would come from what we would add to the fund balance.
- Chair Richardson asked if it was being paid in August to be sure that the contract is honored? Dr. Stapleton replied yes and that's why it will be in August. We will work with HR on that exact date.

Dr. Andy Sandifer asked why would the consolidation fund need to be used? Dr. Stapleton replied that the consolidation funds would only be used if we need to use those funds as a fall back. We have the funding of 3.125 million that the state gave us to fund our consolidation plan, which can include helping balance the budget for the district's transition year. If we need to use any of those funds, we will let you know. In April, we will be presenting the first reading of the budget.

Dr. Sandifer asked if that was a part of the \$105 million? Dr. Stapleton replied that it was not and described the two different funding sources: 3.125 million for the consolidation plan and consolidation costs, while the 105 million is the Savannah River Settlement funding for purposes set forth in the Appropriations Act

Ronald Brown asked if the amount would be the same for the signing bonus? Dr. Stapleton stated that she would move onto to explain the signing bonus and the approval could be done after discussing both.

- (Action) Motion was made to approve a \$1000 Retention Bonus to all certified and classified employees to be paid after school begins in August as presented. Motion was made by Becky Huggins to approve the retention bonus in the amount of \$1000 and seconded by Dr. Andy Sandifer. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. Approval of Signing Bonus for New Hires for Barnwell County School District

- Dr. Stapleton presented a \$2500 signing bonus to newly hired certified teachers, which includes speech pathologists, school psychologists, and therapists.

Dr. Stapleton explained the following:

- This will be advertised immediately, but it will be paid after school begins in August.
- To fund this, funding has been set aside for recruitment efforts within our BCSD Consolidation Plan. We also have CERRA funds, but we do not currently have our allocation for the 2024-2025 school year.
- (Action) Motion was made to approve a \$2500 Signing Bonus with criteria as presented by the superintendent and to be paid after school begins in August as presented. Motion made by Becky Huggins to approve the signing bonus in the amount of \$2500 and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was unanimously approved.

C. Approval of the Re-elect List for 2024-2025 School Year (approval following Executive Session)

- Dr. Stapleton explained that these are the lists of current staff members being recommended for the 2024-2025 school year, and she asked that they be approved following Executive Session.

D. First Reading of Policies

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

Policies Category G

Personnel

- Policy GA- Personnel Goals- This policy outlines the general goals for personnel policies.
- Policy GBE- Staff Rights and Responsibilities- This policy establishes the board's vision for the rights and responsibilities of district staff.
- Policy GBEB- Gifts To and Solicitations by Staff- This policy establishes the board's expectations regarding gifts to and solicitation by staff members.
- Policy GBEBDA- Criminal Record Checks- This policy establishes the structure for criminal records for those hired and volunteering with the district.

Dr. Andy Sandifer asked if the background checks come from HR, and Dr. Stapleton replied yes.

- Policy GBG- Legal Defense of Staff- The policy establishes the basic structure for the defense of district staff in certain legal matters.

Dr. Stapleton explained that there are 107 additional policies within Category G that are currently being revised to bring approval in April and May.

(Action) Motion was made by Dr. Andy Sandifer to approve the first reading of the policies as presented for Section G and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton.

Ronnie Brown asked a clarifying question about Policy GBEC- Gifts To And Solicitation By Staff. Dr. Stapleton explained that, if a staff member has his or her own business, the person can't set up and sell on school property to any staff, students, parents, or any members of the district community. She explained that we have not updated the Use of Facilities policy, but it currently states that we can't rent a facility for use for personal profit unless there is extended approval from the board. It doesn't mean that sporting teams or athletes can't sell to the community. Ronnie Brown stated that he feels that the policy is stating that sales can't be made to the community. Dr. Stapleton stated that that policy can be revisited and additions made. Dr. Stapleton also explained that the option listed in red in the policy asks if the board feels any organizations should be exempt and, if so, please let the superintendent know before the second reading.

The motion to approved the first reading of policies presented was approved unanimously.

E. Second Reading and Approval of Policies

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

Policies- Category D- Fiscal Management

Dr. Stapleton pointed out Policy DGA and explained that there was a change to the wording, "In cases of emergency, as declared by the board, another individual will be designated to sign checks."

- 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.
- 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 sales 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 was made to approve Second Reading and Approval of Policies- Section D as presented. Motion made by SGM Abraham Sexton and seconded by Becky Huggins. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. **Executive Session**

Motion was made to go into Executive Session by Becky Huggins at 6:35 p.m. and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton to discuss:

- Out of District Transfer Request- Students A and B
- Discussion of Employment in regard to 2024-2025 Re-Elect List
- Employment of Employee A, B, C, D, E, F
- Contractual Matters as related to Negotiations with Architectural/Engineering Services and Construction Management at Risk Services.

Chair Richardson asked before going to Executive Session that it is acknowledged that Meredith Wright, Deputy County Administrator, is present and expressed how the district wants to work closely with all government leaders. He also acknowledged a student present that is in Agricultural Science at the Career Center and explained that

the district loves to have students present to participate in the local government process.

The board unanimously approved the motion to enter executive session.

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:52 p.m. Motion made by Dr. Andy Sandifer and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. Motion was unanimously approved.

The following motions were made and approved.

- Motion made to approve Out of District Transfers for Students A and B. Motion made by Becky Huggins and seconded by Ronnie Brown. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Motion made to approve the 2024-2025 Re-Elect Lists as presented by the superintendent. Motion made by Becky Huggins and seconded by Ronnie Brown. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Motion made to approve employment of Employee A, B, C, D, E, F. Motion made by SGM Abraham Sexton and seconded by Dr. Andy Sandifer. The motion was unanimously approved.

VI. Adjournment

A. Announcement of Next Meeting

Chair Richardson explained that the April Board Meeting would be April 23, 2024 at Barnwell Schools Administration Building.

B. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Dr. Andy Sandifer and seconded by Ronnie Brown. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

Chair



Clerk

