

**Minutes of Barnwell County School District**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 28, 2025**  
**(770 Hagood Avenue, Barnwell, SC 29812)**

Board Members Present: Becky Huggins, Felicia Devore, Rosey Anderson, Catrena Hughes-Parker, John Melton

**I. Opening Business**

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

Becky Huggins called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Becky Huggins led the Reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Becky Huggins confirmed the FOI Notice at the closing of the meeting, as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

B. Approval of Agenda – Becky Huggins

A motion was made by Rosey Anderson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Felicia Devore. Hearing no objections, the agenda was unanimously approved.

C. Approval of Consent Agenda Items – Becky Huggins

1. Approval of the November 18, 2024 Swearing-In Special-Called Meeting Minutes – Becky Huggins

The motion was made by Felicia Devore to approve the November 18, 2024 Swearing-In Special-Called Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of the November 26, 2024 Board Regular Meeting Minutes – Becky Huggins

The motion was made by Felicia Devore to approve the November 26, 2024 Board Regular Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of the December 13, 2024 Work Session Minutes – Becky Huggins

The motion was made by Felicia Devore to approve the December 13, 2024 Work Session Minutes. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Approval of January Personnel Report – Becky Huggins

The motion was made by Felicia Devore to approve the January Personnel Report. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Approval of October Financial Report – Becky Huggins

The motion was made by Felicia Devore to approve October Financial Report. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. There was no public participation.

## II. New Business – Presentation of the Audits

- A. Approval of Barnwell School District 45, Barnwell School District 48, and Barnwell County Career Center  
Dr. Stapleton stated that due to the CFO, Holly Hutto and the auditing firm not being in attendance, the presentation of all three audits will be on the February 25, 2025 Regular Board Meeting’s agenda.

## III. Recognition

Dr. Stapleton presented the following recognitions:

- A. 2025 South Carolina School Board Recognition Month

Dr. Stapleton recognized January as being School Board Appreciation Month and read the Governor’s Proclamation. The School Board Theme for this year is “All in”. She thanked the board members for their dedication, commitment, and for all they do. The board members were presented with gifts from each school in the district and the District Office. She asked that they accept the gifts as tokens of appreciation for all the time that they put in and all the effort that they put in to make sure we have a quality public education across the district. She asked that the audience give them a round of applause.

- B. Signing of the Board of Trustees Ethical Principles

Dr. Stapleton explained that the SCBA provides the ethical principle statements as a guide for integrity as you as a board member make decisions about our students throughout Barnwell County.

Chairperson Becky Huggins read the Ethical Principles and each board member signed afterwards. It will be framed and kept in the boardroom throughout the year.

## IV. Superintendent Report

Dr. Stapleton presented the following updates:

- A. Update Related to the BCSD Facility Plan

- We have entered the design and development phase. The Design and Development Kickoff Meeting was held January 9<sup>th</sup>. This meeting consisted of every high school principal, the Career Center Director, and the district chiefs that would be involved in the design and construction of the new facility. Additionally, Becky Huggins was in attendance to represent the school board.
- We will have a second meeting of this group, and then begin having focus groups meet to give input on the design and development. The focus groups will consist of staff members, business and industry representatives, and school board members.

### FEMA Gym and Safe Room

- Total Funding for both Phases of Project:

Total Project Cost: \$10,806,513.64

Federal Share of \$8,104,885.23

Local Share of \$2,701,628.41

- Our 2-year extension request was granted and the Period of Performance will end on November 9, 2027.

- We are now under contract with H.G. Reynolds for construction of the FEMA Safehouse and Gymnasium. Work has begun.
- The groundbreaking will be rescheduled in February.

B. Update related to Land Donation

- Mike Beasley has been working directly with the Office of School Facilities to receive approval for the land donation to the district.
- Coastal Development Partners, a development company out of Spartanburg, contacted the district regarding a land donation. They had purchased a large tract of land for a project, but they only need 3 acres. That leaves 15-16 acres behind the Warhorse baseball field complex that they would like to donate to the district.
- In November, the board approved to move forward with the acquisition of the land donation from Coastal Development Partners. Since then, everything was submitted to the Office of School Facilities (OSF). The acquisition has been approved, so we are moving forward with the closing with our property attorney.

C. Update related to Barnwell County School District Consolidation Plan

Human Resources Updates

- Virtual Alternative Certification Information Sessions are being hosted by the HR Department.
- On January 22, 2025, we hosted 13 participants.
- Upcoming Sessions: January 29<sup>th</sup> and February 4<sup>th</sup>.

Operations Updates

- This Quarter:
  - Walkthroughs are being scheduled with each school principal.
- Weekly Initiatives:
  - Safety walks are conducted weekly with Maintenance Supervisors at each school.
- On-Going Facility Projects
  - At the November board meeting, Dr. Stapleton shared 55 facility projects with the board members that were currently underway at facilities across the district.
  - Of those, 41 are now complete. The rest of those, and now some additional ones, are currently underway.

Special Services Updates

- Our Special Services Department continues to support the implementation of the new IEP Management System, EDPlan SC. They have shared numerous supplemental webinars and training opportunities to support multiple user groups.
- The district received 100% compliance with age 13 transition requirements under federal/state law. *According to federal and state law, transition planning for special education students must begin no later than age 16; however, South Carolina requires transition planning to start at age 13, meaning that by the time a student turns 13, their IEP must include transition goals and services to prepare them for life after high school.*

- Dr. George McIntosh was selected to serve on a state department stakeholder group to provide feedback to improve the evaluation component of EDPlan SC.

### IT Updates

- The IT Department is deploying over 500 new Chromebooks for Williston. This should complete the new Chromebook install for Blackville and Williston. (Other than K and 1<sup>st</sup> for Blackville)
- Avast Anti-Virus: The IT Department is rolling out an updated Avast Antivirus package countywide.
- The district is finalizing the new enrollment (registration) process and completed the purchase of Final Forms. Training is scheduled for February 5<sup>th</sup> for school-level and district-level overseeing enrollment.
- E-Rate: Utilizing E-Rate to purchase 75 Network switches countywide.
  - E-Rate funding is a federal program that helps schools pay for affordable broadband and other telecommunications services.
- Power Scheduler: Kelly Shealy, Kelli Johnson, and John Moody have set up Power Scheduler so the high schools can start registering students for next year.
- Review of Weather Days
  - SC Code Ann. § 59-1-425(B) states that all days missed due to extreme weather or other disruptions must be made up.
  - According to this law, a local school board may grant a waiver for up to three missed days by majority vote, but this can only be done after the district has made up at least three full days or the equivalent number of hours (meaning extending the school days to equate to the appropriate number of hours or doing Saturday hours).
  - For a district who misses additional days due to extreme weather or other disruptions, if the school board waives up to three days after the district makes up three days and there are still additional days, the district may request a waiver from the State Board of Education and then the General Assembly. Please note, this is only after the district has made up at least three full days or the equivalent of.
  - As a reminder, the district is allowed five eLearning days in the school year. These are initiated according to the district's approved eLearning Plan.
  - Tropical Storm Debby  
Heavy rainfall, flooding, and fallen trees caused transportation issues, and over 40 roads were still impassable by Day 3 as more rain/wind continued.
    - Tuesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> – eLearning Day
    - Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup> – eLearning Day
    - Thursday, August 8<sup>th</sup> – eLearning Day
  - Hurricane Helene
    - Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup> – eLearning Day
    - Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup> – School Closure (mass power outages)
    - Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> – School Closure (mass Power outages)
  - Makeup Days for School Closure:
    - 9/30/24 was made up on October 9, 2024 – This was originally a Teacher In-Service day which became an Early Release day for students.
    - 10/1/24 was made up on December 20, 2024 – The half day originally scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup> was moved to December 20<sup>th</sup>.

- Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup> – Dismissed early due to wintry weather occurring sooner and stronger than expected in our area.
- Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> – Followed an early release schedule to prepare for snow that would be impacting our area from Winter Storm Enzo.
- Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> – eLearning Day \*\* Last eLearning Day\*\*
- Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> – School Closure \*\*Must be made up.\*\*
- Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup> – Delayed Start (2 hours)
- Make Up Day for Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> will be made up at the end of the year per our district-approved calendar.
- May 27<sup>th</sup> – now a full day (was a half day)
- May 28<sup>th</sup> – stays a half day
- May 29<sup>th</sup> – becomes a half day

#### D. School and District Good News Updates

- Barnwell High School

Barnwell High School shared photos of the “First Home Wrestling Match Post COVID.” They have had different matches, but they were not a home so being able to get that back going at home has been very exciting. Blackville has a wrestling team, and they partner with Williston so if there are any students from Williston-Elko High School will now have the opportunity to participate. That was approved through the SCHL previously.

- Barnwell Elementary School

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, BES celebrated all the hard work and growth their students and teachers made during first semester. The principal said it was a day full of fun, prizes and high-energy games like BINGO and Rock, Paper, Scissors! Ms. Gooding’s greatest message to students was to “Keep up the great work, and let’s keep POWERING UP together!”

- Guinyard-Butler Middle School

Guinyard-Butler Middle School was very excited to recognize 200 students during the first semester Awards Day Program in January.

#### V. Old Business

#### VI. New Business

##### A. First Reading of Policies

Dr. Stapleton presented the First Reading of the following policy:

1. Policy BE – The only change to the policy is the day of regular board meetings changing to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month.

Please note:

- In February, we will still meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. (This is because of Winter Break.)

- In April, we will still meet the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. (This is because of Spring Break.)

(Action) Motion made for the Approval of the First Reading of the Policy as presented.

Motion made by John Melton to approve the First Reading of the policy as presented by the Superintendent as outlined on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Felicia Devore. The motion was approved unanimously.

## B. Second Reading and Approval of Policies

Dr. Stapleton presented the Second Reading and Approval of the following policies:

1. GBEEA - Social Media – This policy establishes the board’s expectation regarding employee social media use.
2. IKE, -R - Promotion and Retention of Students – This policy and accompanying rule outlines the criteria for promotion, retention, and acceleration.
  - Policy IKE-R – Goes into more detail regarding the State’s requirements for the Read to Succeed State-Mandated Third Grade Retention.
3. IKF, -R - Graduation Requirements – This policy outlines the required coursework necessary to achieve a high school diploma or otherwise graduate.
  - Policy IKF-R – Goes into more detail regarding the 24 units of credit in state-approved courses for graduation.
4. Policy JLCEF, -R – Defines more specific details regarding the signs, symptoms, and management of concussions.
  - Policy JLCEF-E – Form for parents or legal guardians based on requirements from the SCHSL reporting system.

(Action) Motion made for approval of the Second Reading of Policies as presented by the Superintendent as outlined on the agenda.

Motion made by Felicia Devore for the approval of the Second Reading of Policies as presented. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

## VII. Executive Session

Motion made to go into Executive Session by Rosey Anderson at 6:48 p.m. and seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker for the purpose of:

- Discussion of Employment – Employee A and B
- Contractual Matters related to Employees following Letters of Intent
- Discussions of negotiations incident to contractual arrangements, specifically FEMA Safe Room and Hazard Mitigation Grant
- Discussion of negotiations incident to contractual arrangements, specifically ongoing process for OSF approval of land for new high school/career center
- Receipt of legal advice in regard to contractual agreements for facility plan

Motion made to come out of Executive Session at 7:43 p.m. Motion made by Rosey Anderson and seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

No Action Taken

**VIII. Adjournment**

- A. Announcement of Next Meeting
- B. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Huggins asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Rosey Anderson and seconded by Felicia Devore. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Chair Becky W Huggins

Clerk Rosey Anderson