

**Bamberg County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Bamberg County School District Office
September 8, 2025
6:00 p.m.**

Members present: Board Chair David Corder, Vice Chair Naomi Eckels, Secretary Cynthia “Cindy” F. Hurst, Trustee Gwendolyn D. Bamberg, Trustee Jeni Bunch, Trustee Harriet H. Coker, Trustee Tonya A. Sanders-Govan, and Trustee Cathy Ayer Griffin.

Absent: None.

1. **Call meeting to order:** Board Chair David Corder called the meeting to order.

Notice to Media: In accordance with the S. C. Code of Laws of 1976, as amended, Section 30-4-80(E), The Times and Democrat Newspaper, The Bamberg County Leader, WIIZ 97.9 FM, WBSC-LP 102.3 FM, and the Bamberg County School District website have been notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

4. **Approval of Minutes for August 4, 2025.**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2025, meeting as presented. During discussion, Trustee Jeni Bunch requested a minor correction on page 2, item 7(c), changing the word “has” to “as.” Secretary Hurst subsequently withdrew her original motion and moved to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2025, meeting as amended. Vice Chair Naomi Eckels seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, 8–0.

5. **School Reports: Dr. Shannon Johnson, Harriet Davis, Dr. Deonia Simmons, Mandy Edwards, Denise Miller, and Jordan Smith. Hand-outs:** School Reports (Reviewed by Principals/Assistant Principals)

- Denmark-Olar Elementary School –Principal Dr. Shannon Johnson
- Denmark-Olar Middle School – Principal Harriett Davis
- Denmark-Olar High School Principal – Principal Dr. Deonia Simmons
- Richard Carroll Elementary School – Principal Mandy Edwards
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School – Principal Denise Miller
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School – Principal Jordan Smith

Following their board report presentations, each principal recognized the 2025–2026 new hires within their respective schools.

6. **Athletic Reports: Robert Williams**

Athletic Director Robert Williams reviewed the athletic report as presented for Bamberg County School District. [Board Packet Enclosure]

7. **Student/Staff Recognition and Superintendent's Report**

Interim Superintendent noted the following:

- a) Mr. Ulmer personally welcomed all new Bamberg County School District employees and emphasized his commitment to supporting both new and veteran staff members.
- b) Mr. Ulmer recognized the Golden Apple Awards presentation held on August 8, 2025, during which WJBF News Channel 6 honored Mrs. Amy Stembridge, 7th–8th Grade ELA Teacher at Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School, and Master Sergeant Barry Leveretter, JROTC Instructor at Denmark-Olar High School, with this prestigious recognition.
- c) Mr. Ulmer commended Bamberg County School District's 2025–2026 School-Level Teachers of the Year, who were selected by their colleagues and peers and will now begin the process for District Teacher of the Year:
 - **Richard Carroll Elementary School (RCES):** Sabrina Lawson
 - **Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School (BEMS):** Elaine Alicia Downing
 - **Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School (BEHS):** Vanessa Glover-Robinson
 - **Denmark-Olar Elementary School (DOES):** Wanda Jones-Inabinet
 - **Denmark-Olar Middle School (DOMS):** Mattie Jamison
 - **Denmark-Olar High School (DOHS):** Jennifer Sanders
- d) Mr. Ulmer introduced and expressed his appreciation to the Bamberg County School District Technology staff for their dedicated service:
 - **Ricky Padgett** – Technology Director
 - **James Strickland** – Assistant Technology Director
 - **Charlotte Schlamp** – Instructional Technology Coach
 - **Shaquita Johnson** – Technology Assistant
 - **Tommy Williams** – Technology Assistant
 - **Landon Stanfield** – Part-Time Technology Assistant
- e) Mr. Ulmer on behalf of the district, expressed condolences to the family of the Denmark-Olar High School student who recently passed. He acknowledged that this loss is deeply felt throughout the community and noted that support services are available for both students and staff as the community grieves together.
- f) Mr. Ulmer presented a three-year summary of Bamberg County School District's performance on SC Ready, End-of-Course (EOC), and Career Readiness Assessments, noting that scores have shown consistent improvement over the past three years.
- g) Mr. Ulmer provided updates on the eLearning plan issued by the South Carolina Department of Education and shared a copy of the district's eLearning plan with the Board, noting that the district is still allotted five eLearning days. He explained that these days cannot be used in situations where internet access may be disrupted, but they may be utilized on scheduled makeup days, if needed.

- h) Mr. Ulmer provided an update on the district's Parent Engagement Initiative, MyPowerHub, noting that installation of the program has been completed and employee training is the next step. He advised that the district has not yet received a date for the program's activation and deployment, but parents will soon receive detailed instructions on how to sign up. Additionally, he noted that parents who already have PowerSchool login credentials will not need to complete a separate signup.
- i) SCSBA Delegates for 2024 Delegate Assembly -- December 6, 2025
Mr. Ulmer reviewed information regarding the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) Delegate Assembly and requested that Bamberg County School District send a delegate. The Board approved Vice Chair Naomi Eckels to serve as the delegate, with Trustee Jeni Bunch designated as the alternate.
- j) Mr. Ulmer provided a brief overview of the South Carolina School Boards Association's Accidental Death and Dismemberment policies and advised Board members to submit any beneficiary changes or updates as needed
- k) Mr. Ulmer reminded Board members of the upcoming SCSBA Basics of Boardmanship Training, scheduled for September 17, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Bamberg County School District Office, and encouraged all members to attend.
- l) Mr. Ulmer concluded by giving an update on district enrollment, reporting a total of 1,779 students as of the September 3, 2025.

8. **District High School Elective Textbook Selections (Action Needed)**

Mr. Ulmer presented the Board with proposed textbook selections for the following high school elective courses:

- **Course: *Theater 1***
Textbook: McGraw Hill LLC, Glenco Theater: Art in Action—Author: Robert D Taylor; Robert D Strickland, ISBN-13: 9780021397822
- **Course: *Reasoning in Mathematics***
Textbook: Savaas Learning Company, Blitzer, Thinking Mathematically 8th ed.— Author: Francisco Borrero, ISBN-13: 9780137605798
- **Course: *Food and Nutrition***
Textbook: Savvas Learning Company LLC -- Food and Nutrition for You -- Author: Emergent Learning Student Edition-9780134717135 + Six Single use eText Access Code Cards-9780134680606 Package ISBN-13: 9780134717135
- **Course: *Baking and Pastry***
Textbook: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. -- Professional Baking, 6th Edition -- Author: Gisslen --Student Edition Print-9781118998700 with eBook, 6-Year Access Set Bundle, ISBN-13: 9780134717135
- **Course: *Personal Financial Literacy***
Textbook: B.E. Publishing, Personal Financial Literacy, 1st ed., ISBN-13: 9781626893177

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Mr. Ulmer advised that either high school may utilize the textbooks, provided the respective course is offered at that school.

After reviewing the high school elective textbook selections, **Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, to accept the recommended high school elective textbook selections.** The motion passed 8-0.

9. **Request for Out of State/Overnight Trip:**

- a. **Bamberg-Ehrhardt & Denmark-Olar High School Agriculture/FFA Programs – Sunbelt Agricultural Expo and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Tour – Moultrie/Tifton, GA – October 15–16, 2025 (Baylee Varnadoe, DOHS Agriculture Instructor, and Russell Henderson, BEHS Agriculture Instructor)**
- b. **National Young Farm Educational Association (NYFEA) 59th Annual Institute Professional Development – Nashville, TN – December 10-13, 2025 (Baylee Varnadoe, DOHS Agriculture Instructor)**

Following a review of the requests for out-of-state/overnight travel, **Trustee Harriet Coker moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, to approve the following:**

- **Bamberg-Ehrhardt and Denmark-Olar High School Agriculture/FFA Programs – Attendance at the Sunbelt Agricultural Expo and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Tour in Moultrie/Tifton, GA, October 15–16, 2025.**
- **Denmark-Olar High School Agriculture Instructor, Baylee Varnadoe – Attendance at the National Young Farmer Educational Association (NYFEA) 59th Annual Institute for Professional Development in Nashville, TN, December 10–13, 2025.**

The motion passed 8-0.

10. **Second Reading – BCSD Policies – Section G – Personnel:**

- a. **GCC – Professional Staff Leave and Absences**
- b. **GCC-R – Professional Staff Leave and Absences**
- c. **GDC – Support Staff Leave and Absences**
- d. **GCCAAA – Sick Leave Bank Program**
- e. **GCCAAA-R – Sick Leave Bank Program**
- f. **GCCAAA-E – Sick Leave Bank Program**
- g. **GCCAAA-E(1) – Sick Leave Bank Program**

Mr. Ulmer presented policies GCC, GCC-R, GDC, GCCAAA, GCCAAA-R, GCCAA-E, and GCCAAA-E(1) for second reading.

Following a brief discussion, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded, the motion to approve the second reading of Policies GCC – Professional Staff Leave and Absences, GCC-R – Professional Staff Leave and Absences, GDC – Support Staff Leave and Absences, GCCAAA – Sick Leave Bank Program, GCCAAA-R – Sick Leave Bank Program, GCCAAA-E – Sick Leave Bank Program, and GCCAAA-E(1) – Sick Leave Bank Program.** The motion passed 8-0.
[Board Packet Enclosures]

11. **First Reading – BCSD Policies – Section A – Foundations and Basic Commitments:**
 - a. **AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity**
 - b. **ACE – Service Animals (Public)**

Mr. Ulmer presented policies AC and ACE for first reading.

Following a brief discussion, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Jeni Bunch seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policies AC – Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and ACE – Service Animals (Public)** The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

12. **First Reading – BSCD Policy – Section B – School Board Governance and Operations:**
 - a. **BEA – Livestreaming of Board Meetings**

Mr. Ulmer presented policy BEA for first reading.

Following a brief discussion, **Trustee Jeni Bunch moved, and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policy BEA – Livestreaming of Board Meetings.** The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosure]

13. **First Reading – BCSD Policy – Section D – Fiscal Management**
 - a. **DKC-R – Expense Authorization/Reimbursement**

Mr. Ulmer presented policy DKC-R for first reading.

Following a brief discussion, **Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved, and Vice Chair Naomi Eckels seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policy DKC-R – Expense Authorization/Reimbursement.** The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosure]

14. **First Reading – BCSD Policies – Section G – Personnel:**
 - a. **GBA – Open Hiring/Equal Employment Opportunity**
 - b. **GBAA-R – Sexual Harassment and Retaliation (Staff)**
 - c. **GBAC-R – Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Staff)**
 - d. **GBGAA – Service Animals (Staff)**
 - e. **GCLE – Unencumbered Time**
 - f. **GCLE-R – Unencumbered Time**

Mr. Ulmer presented policies GBA, GBAA-R, GBAC-R, GBGAA, GCLE, and GCLE-R for first reading.

Following a brief discussion, **Trustee Cathy Griffin moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policies GBA – Open Hiring/Equal Employment Opportunity, GBAA-R – Sexual Harassment and Retaliation (Staff), GBAC-R – Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Staff),**

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GBGAA – Service Animals (Staff), GCLE – Unencumbered Time, and GCLE-R – Unencumbered Time. The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

15. **First Reading – BCSD Policies – Section J – Personnel**

- a. **JB – Equal Educational Opportunity/Nondiscrimination**
- b. **JIAA-R – Sexual Harassment and Retaliation (Students)**
- c. **JIAB – R – Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Students)**
- d. **JJAB – Limited Open Forum**
- e. **JLCDD – Service Animals (Students)**

Mr. Ulmer presented policies JB, JIAA-R, JIBA-R, JJAB, and JLCDD for first reading.

Following a brief discussion, **Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved, and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policies JB – Equal Educational Opportunity/Nondiscrimination, JIAA-R – Sexual Harassment and Retaliation (Students), JIAB – R – Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Students), JJAB – Limited Open Forum, JLCDD -- Service Animals (Students).** The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

16. **Monthly Financial Report**

Chief Financial Officer Devon Furr presented the Financial Report for Bamberg County School District for FY 2024-2025 as of August 2025, for review. [Board Packet Enclosure]

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded the motion to accept and approve the Financial Report for August 2025, as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

17. **Visitors' Comments**

None.

18. **Executive Session**

Board Chair David Corder called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to enter Executive Session. The motion carried 8-0.

Board Chair David Corder noted that the Board would be moving into Executive Session to discuss Interim Superintendent Evaluation, Recognition of District Personnel, Employment/Personnel Matters Related to: Personnel Recommendations for Hire, Personnel Recommendations for Resignation, and Matters Related to Release of Students.

Open session: Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion for the Board to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular session of the meeting. The motion carried 8-0.

19. **Action on Executive Session Items**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded, the motion to accept and approve Agenda Item 18(c)(1) Personnel Recommendations for Hire for employee a. The motion passed 8-0.

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion to accept and approve Agenda Item 18(d) To Discuss Matters Related to Release of Students for students 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The motion passed 8-0.

With respect to Agenda Item 18(a) To Discuss Interim Superintendent Evaluation, Agenda Item 18(b) To Discuss Recognition of District Personnel, and Agenda Item 18(c)(2) To Discuss Personnel Recommendations for Resignation, there was no action taken.

20. **Board Member Comments**

- Vice Chair Naomi Eckels welcomed new teachers to the district and thanked them for joining Bamberg County School District.
- Trustee Harriet Coker commended the smooth start to the school year, crediting teachers, principals, administrative staff, and Mr. Ulmer.
- Secretary Cynthia Hurst thanked all who contributed to a successful start, noted it was nice to meet new hires, and expressed optimism for the year ahead.
- Chair David Corder welcomed new staff, noted positive feedback that this was the smoothest start in many years, highlighted encouraging test scores, anticipated strong report card results, and expressed appreciation for teamwork across the district.

21. **Adjourn**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 8-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Minutes approved:

David Corder, Board Chair

Cynthia Hurst, Secretary