

Minutes of Barnwell County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, November 24, 2025
(770 Hagood Avenue, Barnwell, SC 29812)

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

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 went out as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

Dr. Stapleton asked that the FY25 Audit for Information Report be moved on the agenda to be presented before the Superintendent's Report.

B. Approval of Agenda – Becky Huggins

A motion was made by Rosey Anderson to approve the agenda as presented with the modification for the FY25 Audit for Information Report being moved before the Superintendent's Report. The motion was seconded by Felicia Devore. Hearing no objections, the agenda was unanimously approved.

C. Election of Board Officers- Superintendent/Chairperson

Dr. Stapleton shared the following guidelines from Policy BD for the election process:

Board Officers

- Officers: chair, vice-chair, secretary (which we call clerk)
- Elected annually at the November regular meeting
- Each officer serves a one-year term

Election Process

- Superintendent serves as presiding officer during election of the chair
- Officers elected by majority vote
- Voting conducted by a secret ballot
- Superintendent appoints a district staff member to count ballots
- Once chair is elected, he/she becomes the presiding officer

Nominations

- Presiding officer calls for nominations
- Any board member may nominate any eligible member, including themselves
- No second required
- Nominee remains on the ballot until elected or they withdraw
- If nominee declines, their name is not included in the vote

Voting

- All participating board members, including nominees, may vote
- If there is only one nominee, election may be conducted by voice vote
- If there are more than two nominees and no candidate receives a majority: A runoff is held between the top two vote-getters

The Board of Trustees elected the following Officers:

- Chairperson- Becky Huggins
- Vice-Chairperson- Felicia Devore
- Clerk- Rosey Anderson

There was only one nomination from the floor for each position (as listed above) and the election results for each board office were approved unanimously.

D. Approval of Consent Agenda Items – Becky Huggins

1. Approval of October 21, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of November 10, 2025 Board Work Session Minutes
3. Approval of November 10, 2025 Special-Called Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of November Personnel Report
5. Approval of September Financial Report

The motion was made by Felicia Devore to approve the consent agenda items. The motion was seconded by John Melton. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. There was no public participation.

New Business - Barnwell County School District FY25 Audit for Information (voted to move before Superintendent Report)

Dr. Stapleton introduced CFO Holly Hutto for the presentation of the audit.

CFO Hutto explained that the audit for informational purposes for Barnwell County School District would be presented. The audit dates are from June 2024 through June 2025. David Enzastiga of Rish & Enzastiga presented the audit information.

The following information provides highlights from this audit report as it was presented and shared with local media:

Barnwell County School District Receives Unmodified Audit for 2024–2025 Fiscal Year

The Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees received the District’s 2024–2025 financial audit during its regularly scheduled Board meeting on November 24, 2025. The audit reflect a strong financial position and effective fiscal management during the District’s first year following consolidation. This audit marks the first comprehensive financial audit since the July 2024 consolidation of Barnwell School District 45, Barnwell County Consolidated School District, and the Barnwell County Career Center. The audit was presented to the Board by David Enzastiga of Rish & Enzastiga, following an introduction by Chief Financial Officer Holly Hutto.

The District received an unmodified audit opinion, the highest level of assurance an external audit can provide. An unmodified opinion indicates that the District’s financial statements are presented fairly and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. According to the Management’s Discussion and Analysis included in the audit and prepared by CFO Holly Hutto, the District’s positive financial standing is attributed to increased state and local revenues as well as actual expenditures coming in below budgeted amounts.

“Completing our first audit following consolidation with an unmodified opinion is a significant accomplishment. It confirms that the District is on solid financial footing and reflects the strength of our financial systems, effective internal controls, and strategic management of resources as we continue to support student success now and into the future,” said Hutto.

The audit reported no material weaknesses, no significant deficiencies classified as material weaknesses, and no instances of non-compliance that would impact the District’s financial statements. Mr. Enzastiga reported to the Board that the District’s internal controls are functioning effectively, with no audit findings identified. Mr. Enzastiga explained that because this was the District’s first audit following consolidation, the District was classified as medium risk for audit purposes as required for all new entities. However, he indicated that, due to the absence of findings, the District is well positioned to qualify as low risk in future audits, reflecting continued strong financial management.

Mr. Enzastiga also commended the District’s overall financial condition, noting that fund balance levels are healthy, debt remains reasonable, and fiscal operations are well managed. He expressed appreciation for the District’s professionalism and cooperation throughout the audit process. The Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees and District leadership remain committed to transparency, accountability, and responsible financial stewardship in support of students, staff, and the Barnwell County community.

II. Superintendent Report- Superintendent

A. Update related to the BCSD Facility Plan

Dr. Stapleton gave the following update related to facilities, as well as shared photos from around the district:

- We are awaiting news on our Period of Performance Extension Request from FEMA.
- The Board was able to visit the site during our work session on November 10th.

Update on New High School

- We met today with the City and GHD (engineering firm) to discuss the next steps in regard to the utilities being run to the site.
- We have been evaluating the *Value Engineering Items* to consider and the *Add Alternates*.
- The official construction documents are still being created by SSOE.
- We will be having an Interior Finishes meeting the beginning of December.

B. District Updates

Dr. Stapleton shared the following district update regarding a closer look at the millage:

- The County mailed out 2025-2026 property tax bills after a recent reassessment of property values.
- However, an important required adjustment known as a “rollback” which reduces the tax rate when property values increase so that collections remain revenue-neutral- was not applied.
- As a result, the County has announced that some taxpayers were billed at a higher rate than intended under South Carolina law.
- The County announced they would be working with the school district and municipalities to review and ensure the millage rate was set appropriately.
- We immediately reached out to South Carolina Department of Revenue, because according to the consolidation bill, our millage has been set by them since the start of the new countywide consolidation. They agreed, and provided confirmation, that our millage was set correctly.
- Dr. Stapleton shared the wording from legislation about setting our millage for 2024 and 2025 (shown below). Specifically, it references Section 12-43-285 which is the law that talks about reassessment. It says neither section 12-43-285 nor any other state or local law shall be interpreted to provide a basis or discretion for the county to reduce the millage rate set for DOR.

Millage levy

Section 5. (A) For purpose of determining the 2024 property tax millage levy of the Barnwell County School District upon its creation, the millage levy for the district must be determined and calculated by the Department of Revenue based on the 2023 levy of the three present school districts and the value of a mill in each district. The county shall levy the millage as calculated and determined by the Department of Revenue, no less. Neither Section 12-43-285, nor any other state or local law shall be interpreted to provide a basis or discretion for the county to reduce the millage rate set by the Department of Revenue. Thereafter, the millage levy for the year 2025 must be the millage levy for the previous year. To the allowed millage levy for the 2024 and 2025 may be added any millage determined by the Department of Revenue necessary to comply with educational mandates imposed by federal or state law.

III. Old Business
IV. New Business

A. Approval of Barnwell County School District FY25 Audit for Information– Action Item

(Action) Motion made for the Approval of Barnwell County School District FY25 Audit for Information- Becky Huggins

Motion made by Catrena Hughes-Parker to approve the Barnwell County School District FY25 Audit for Information. The motion was seconded by Rosey Anderson. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Approval of MEMS Field Experience to State Junior Beta Club Convention-Action Item

Dr. Stapleton shared the following information:

- We seek approval tonight for middle school students from Williston-Elko Middle School (WEMS) and Macedonia/Elementary Middle School (MEMS) to attend the Junior Beta Club Convention January 21st through January 23rd. There are also elementary students from MEMS who attend the elementary portion of the Convention.
- The curriculum department has been approving field trips based on Board Policy and created consistent district guidelines based on the policy, so they are working with both schools to ensure all necessary information is approved.
- Your approval tonight is to allow both schools to have this overnight field experience, and the BCSD Curriculum Department will continue following up with both schools to ensure everything is turned in and approved appropriately.

Motion made by John Melton to approve the MEMS Field Experience to State Junior Beta Club Convention. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Approval of WEMS Field Experience to State Junior Beta Club Convention- Action Item

Motion made by John Melton for Approval of WEMS Field Experience to State Junior Beta Club Convention. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Approval of the Barnwell County Representative on Barnwell County First Steps Board-Action Item

Dr. Stapleton shared information regarding the school district's representation on the First Steps of Barnwell County's Board and requested approval for April Smith to be the Barnwell County School District Representative on the Barnwell County First Steps Board.

Motion made by Catrena Hughes-Parker for the approval of the Barnwell County Representative on Barnwell County First Steps Board. The motion was seconded by John Melton. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. Approval of New PreK Class at Barnwell Primary School-Action Item

Dr. Stapleton shared the following information about the new PreK class:

- Through our partnership with First Steps of Barnwell County and First Steps at the state level, we are excited to announce an expansion of our early childhood programming.

- In meeting with state officials, it was determined that funding could best be utilized to add another 3 year old classroom at Barnwell Primary School to allow the children on the waiting lists to be able to participate in a PreK program.
- This is fully funded by First Steps.
- Tonight we seek approval to add this additional class, fully funded by First Steps, at Barnwell Primary School.

Motion made by Felicia Devore for the approval of a new PreK class at Barnwell Primary School. The motion was seconded by Rosey Anderson. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. Executive Session

Motion made to go into Executive Session by John Melton at 6:29 p.m. and seconded by Rosey Anderson for the purpose of:

Discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline, or release of an employee, a student, or a person regulated by a public body or the appointment of a person to a public body.

- *Student A and B School Choice Requests*

Motion made to come out of Executive Session at 6:46 p.m. Motion made by Rosey Anderson and seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion made by Felicia Devore for the approval of School of Choice Requests: Students A and B. The motion was seconded by John Melton. The motion was approved unanimously.

VI. Adjournment

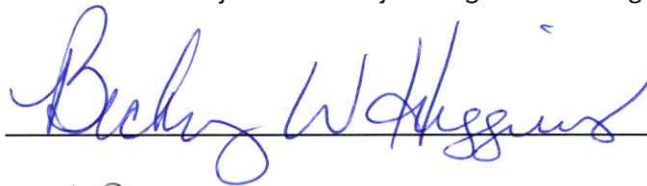
A. Announcement of Next Meeting

Regular Board Meeting scheduled for January 20, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Huggins asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by John Melton and seconded by Felicia Devore. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Chair



Clerk

