

Academic Board Committee Meeting

Thu, Feb 26, 2026

The meeting opened with a reminder that the session was being recorded and that Tanedra Washington is the official minute taker, so additional note takers should be removed from the meeting platform and greeted trustees and academic staff as the meeting proceeded to a call to order.

Agenda Approval and Minutes

Jennifer Morrison requested removal of agenda item 6.5 because the policy IJL document lacked a redline showing changes; Niki Porter moved to approve the agenda with that exception and the Committee proceeded to approve the January 28th minutes.

Magnet Program Recognition Introduction

Jennifer Morrison introduced Barbara Turner to present accomplishments in the academic's department, emphasizing magnet program visibility and noting prior Board brief publication of the awards.

Magnet Awards Details and Finalists

Barbara Turner reported 28 magnet programs across 18 schools earned Merit Awards. She described the five magnet pillars used for evaluation and announced that Condor Integrated Arts Elementary and Forest Lake NASA Explorer Elementary advanced to national finalist status and will host Magnet Schools of America evaluators on March 6th for on-site visits, including leadership, teacher/parent, and student panels and tours.

Award Categories and Stakeholder Feedback

Committee members asked for clarification on award categories; Barbara explained that "top merit" denotes perfect scores or recent national designations while "distinction" reflects high but non-perfect scores. Mrs. Porter and Ms. Williams noted community pride in magnet offerings and the value of magnet fairs for placement decisions.

Follow-ups, Program Evaluations, and Policy Work

The Committee moved to reviewing action-item follow-ups, reporting that the AVID ROI evaluation is expected next week while the CCR evaluation remains open. They discussed policy review work including compiling a list of policies for committee review and investigating the School Boards Association policy audit as a potential resource for reviewing district policies. Jennifer Morrison planned to add conference follow-up and present an academics dashboard demo to the full Board.

Metric framework overview

Jennifer Morrison introduced a leveled metrics framework for the Academic dashboard, describing level one as summative outcomes that can be disaggregated by grade and subgroup and used to evaluate district performance against strategic-plan goals. She asked for visible agreement from Mrs. Porter and Ms. Williams noted public availability constraints tied to Department of Education embargoes.

Formative measurement and coaching cycles

The committee discussed level two formative results used during the year to monitor progress toward summative goals, including examples like measuring the effectiveness of coaching cycles. Mrs. Porter cautioned that formative data could be perceived as summative if displayed publicly and warned against creating extra assessments; qualitative coach feedback was highlighted as valuable.

District outputs and strategic strands

Mrs. Morrison described level three district-output metrics that document actions (for example, counting coaching cycles) that support formative and summative outcomes and emphasized the need for shared definitions, so stakeholders understand what a coaching cycle is. She mapped strategic-plan strands (graduation rate, college and career readiness, SE-ready/EOC, school climate, report card ratings) into the framework for dashboard design. The team is considering using Tableau (or a similar tool) to enable subgroup filtering and mixed access to public and private data views.

Technical approach and subgroup reporting

The team discussed presenting subgroup views electronically to avoid long tables and considered Tableau as the likely tool while acknowledging training needs for the Board. Trustees requested subgroup visibility for targeted improvement areas such as African American males and MLL students.

Transition to item 6.1 and presentation handoff

Mrs. Morrison asked Dr. O'Tasha Morgan to present guidance and pathways work requested by Trustees Porter and Williams as they requested clearer, consistent communications about guidance, pathways, and choices. Mrs. Morrison noted that Dr. Morgan had incorporated feedback from a parent advisory board into the presentation.

Placement transparency and parent resources

Dr. Morgan described efforts to make student placement information accessible to families, including creating a hub of resources and placement guides so parents can access information without asking staff. She emphasized multiple measures rather than one-size-fits-all placements and the importance of family partnerships in communicating criteria.

Placement criteria and "bubble" students

The group discussed objective placement criteria and the use of assessments, grades, and teacher input to place students, with special handling for students near cut scores ("bubble kids") where additional review may lead to bumping placements. The district runs placement data twice—initial placement and a later run after spring assessments to capture students who move into eligibility. Counselors and administrators are expected to review students near cut scores and allow for parent input and waivers/appeals

Dr. Morgan noted work to remove subjectivity and to review borderline cases through counselor involvement.

Accountability, audits, and district review practices

Participants raised accountability concerns and described audit-like practices from other districts, including quarterly or semester reviews of caseload and enrollment distributions to ensure equitable access. Dr. Morgan noted some schools use predictive data to adjust criteria so cohorts with different academic profiles receive appropriate access to honors courses

Terminology, appeals, and inequities in course access

Conversation turned to practical problems where students are blocked from courses due to magnet or program rules, creating inequitable trajectories and out-of-pocket remediation like summer courses. Concerns were raised about students being blocked from courses due to magnet placement, prompting suggestions for audits and an appeals process. Questions emerged about an appeals process and consistent terminology for course levels (honors/advanced/accelerated), prompting commitments to clarify language and processes.

IGP conferences, communication channels, and publication plans

Dr. Morgan outlined the IGP process. IGP conferences are student-led in middle school and begin in eighth grade, with a separate high-school IGP combined with IGP/registration meetings. She stated the district is implementing transparent placement guides, course catalogs, and distribution plans for placement guides via students, Parent Square, school events, and counselor meetings.

Course catalog availability and parent communication

The committee discussed adding school-level labels to the course guide because not all courses are offered at every high school and offerings depend on instructor availability and enrollment. Speakers emphasized including disclaimers and clear communication, so parents understand that catalog listing does not guarantee annual offering. The high school course catalog will delineate which schools offer each course code to reduce parent confusion.

Dual enrollment, transcript rules, and virtual options

The group clarified that dual credit courses require college agreements to appear on the district transcript and that state law limits accepting arbitrary summer college courses. The team recommended communicating virtual partner options and counselor approvals for students needing specific courses not offered locally.

* Course offerings are not guaranteed; they require an instructor and sufficient student enrollment.

* Parents must understand that out-of-district or arbitrary summer college courses cannot be placed on the district transcript without an agreement, per state law.

Policy IKC (valedictorian/salutatorian) and virtual students

The committee reviewed policy IKC's treatment of class ranking and graduation honors, noting rankings finalize after senior-year grades are in and that a 130-day enrollment threshold applies for top 10 recognition. Members agreed to draft revised policy language to explicitly include virtual/remote students and return it to the committee before policy review due to imminent graduations.

Administrative rules (JLCDR) and measles instructional plan

The committee noted a 2025 update to administrative rule JLCDR focused on over-the-counter medication changes and planned to include that AR on the next agenda. The district is finalizing an instructional plan to serve students quarantined for measles, considering testing schedules, graduation credit recovery, and health-department guidance.

Board briefings, next meeting, and adjournment

Jennifer Morrison committed to preparing Board briefs summarizing committee discussions and publishing the next meeting agenda publicly.

The next Academic Committee meeting was set for March 26 at 12:30pm. The committee approved the agenda items for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm

Action Items

- * The Academics department will finalize and deliver the AVID return-on-investment program evaluation by next week
- * Jennifer Morrison will compile the list of policies showing dates of Board review for Committee consideration
- * Niki Porter will reach out about using South Carolina School Boards Association policy audit services and report back if she takes action
- * Jennifer Morrison will discuss the possibility of a policy audit with Marsha Lennon and report back to the Committee
- * Jennifer Morrison will prepare and present the academics dashboard demonstration to Committee members and arrange sharing for the session
- * Jennifer Morrison will add follow-up from the South Carolina School Boards Association conference to the next Committee meeting agenda and include that in the Board brief
- * Jennifer Morrison will provide definitions for the metrics to be reported and identify data sources for each metric
- * Dr. O'Tasha Morgan will present the guidance, pathways, and choices work to the Board as requested by Trustees Porter and Williams
- * Jennifer Morrison will provide a response about audits, magnet-course access, and the appeals process at the next Committee Meeting or in a Board brief
- * Jennifer Morrison will provide specific, clarified language defining honors/advanced/accelerated hierarchy for parents and staff
- * School staff will bring curriculum labeling and course-classification concerns to Dr. Davis and his team for clarification
- * All schools will send placement guides home with students and include them in standard parent communications (ParentSquare and information nights)
- * Jennifer Morrison will draft revised policy language for IKC to explicitly include virtual and remote students and bring it back to the committee for discussion before it goes to the policy committee.
- * Jennifer Morrison will add administrative rule AR JLCDR (over-the-counter medication updates) to the next meeting agenda.

* Jennifer Morrison will ask the relevant team to consider adding a registration statement that explains measles quarantine procedures and the 21-day rule for unvaccinated students.

* Jennifer Morrison will prepare and publish a Board brief summarizing committee discussions, guidance documents, and website updates for Board members to review.
