

**Bamberg County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Bamberg County School District Office
April 13, 2026
6:00 p.m.**

Members present: Board Chair David Corder, Vice Chair Naomi Eckels, Secretary Cynthia F. Hurst, Trustee Gwendolyn D. Bamberg, Trustee Adrienne C. Blume, Trustee Jeni Bunch, Trustee Harriet H. Coker (Via Zoom), 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 Adrienne Blume seconded, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

4. **Approval of Minutes March 2, 2026 and March 27, 2026**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, to accept the March 2, 2026 and March 27, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

5. **School Reports: Dr. Shannon Johnson, Harriett Davis, Dr. Deonia Simmons, Mandy Edwards, Denise Miller, and Jordan Smith.** [Board Packet Enclosures]

- Denmark-Olar Elementary School – Principal Dr. Shannon Johnson
- Denmark-Olar Middle School – Principal Harriett Davis
- Denmark-Olar High School – 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

Interim Superintendent Dennis R. Ulmer, Jr. presented Denmark-Olar Middle School's report in the absence of Principal Harriett Davis. During his presentation, Mr. Ulmer recognized the school's Spelling Bee winners: Cairo Buathong (1st Place), Brendan Miller (2nd Place), and Messiah Green (3rd Place).

During Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School's report, Principal Denise Miller congratulated the 2026 Garden Club of South Carolina Award winners: Hampton Jowers (1st Place), Robert Hurst, IV (2nd Place), Rivie Fralick (3rd Place), and Olivia Shaffer (Honorable Mention).

6. **Update of Denmark-Olar Middle School's Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)/Turnaround Plan**
Interim Superintendent Dennis R. Ulmer, Jr. provided a brief update on Denmark-Olar Middle School's Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), noting it was submitted on March 20, 2026. He reiterated that the plan focuses on three priority areas: student achievement, Tier 1 instruction, and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.
7. **Truancy Report/Update: Denise Robinson-Crosby**
Truancy Officer Denise Robinson-Crosby reviewed the truancy report as presented for Bamberg County School District. [Board Packet Enclosure]
8. **Athletic Reports: Robert Williams**
Principal Jordan Smith reviewed the athletic report as presented for Bamberg County School District in the absence of Athletic Director Robert Williams. [Board Packet Enclosure]
9. **Student/Staff Recognition and Superintendent's Report**
Interim Superintendent Ulmer noted the following:
 - a) Mr. Ulmer provided an update on the district and school renewal plans, advising that they are currently being finalized and will be submitted prior to the April 30, 2026 deadline.
 - b) Mr. Ulmer commended district and school staff for their diligence in meeting state requirements related to school improvement efforts. He reported that the district received official notification confirming full compliance with School Improvement Council (SIC) requirements for the 2025–2026 school year. He further noted that 100% of schools met all required reporting deadlines and statutory obligations.

Mr. Ulmer expressed appreciation for the continued hard work and commitment demonstrated across the district and encouraged all schools to maintain this level of performance moving forward.
 - c) Mr. Ulmer provided an update on district enrollment, noting a total of 1,762 students as of April 1, 2026.
 - d) Mr. Ulmer concluded his report by informing the Board of a request from the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) to celebrate the Class of 2026. The Board was invited to participate in a photo opportunity featuring the SCSBA “Congratulations! Class of 2026 — Your School Board Salutes You!” sign.
10. **Request for Out of State/Overnight Trip**
 - a. **Denmark-Olar High School JROTC – Patriots Point Maritime Naval Museum – Mt. Pleasant, SC -- April 30, 2026–May 1, 2026 (Phillip Robinson, JROTC Instructor)**
 - b. **Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School Golf Team – State Championship – Chester, SC – May 10, 2026-May 11, 2026 (Mary Templeton, Golf Coach)**

- c. Professional Development Request -- ISTE Live 26 Conference -- Orlando, FL -- June 27, 2026-July 1, 2026 (Charlotte Schlamp, Instructional Technology Coach)**

Following a review of the requests for out-of-state and overnight travel, **Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Adrienne Blume seconded, to approve the request of JROTC Instructor Phillip Robinson for Denmark-Olar High School's JROTC students to attend the Patriots Point Maritime Naval Museum in Mount Pleasant, SC, April 30–May 1, 2026; Coach Mary Templeton's request for Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School's golf team to attend the State Championship in Chester, SC, May 10–11, 2026; and Instructional Technology Coach Charlotte Schlamp's professional development request to attend the ISTE Live 26 Conference in Orlando, FL, June 27–July 1, 2026.** The motion passed 9-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

11. Monthly Financial Report

Chief Financial Officer Devon Furr presented the Financial Report for Bamberg County School District for FY 2025-2026 as of March 2026, for review. [Board Packet Enclosure]

Ms. Furr requested that the Board schedule a budget work session to begin the budget development process. She noted that only preliminary allocations are currently available. She further advised that, if the state has not adopted a budget by the next Board meeting, she may need to bring a continuing resolution in May.

Following a brief discussion, the Board agreed to hold a budget work session on May 1, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion to accept and approve the Financial Report for March 2026, as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

12. Visitors' Comments

Mr. Jackson Price, a substitute teacher within the district, expressed his opinion that substitutes are paid \$75.00 per day and suggested that substitute compensation should be increased.

13. Executive Session

Board Chair David Corder called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Trustee Cathy Griffin moved, and Trustee Jeni Bunch seconded, the motion to enter Executive Session. The motion carried 9-0.

Board Chair David Corder noted that the Board would be moving into Executive Session to discuss Employment/Personnel Matters Related to: Personnel Recommendations for Hire, Personnel Recommendations for Resignation, Matters Related to Release of Students, and Contractual Matters Regarding: Custodial Services and Legal Services.

Open session: Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Adrienne Blume seconded, the motion for the board to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular session of the meeting. The motion carried 9-0.

14. **Action on Executive Session Items**

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Jeni Bunch seconded, the motion to accept and approve Agenda Item 13(a)(1) to Discuss Personnel Recommendations for Hire for employees a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, and k; Agenda Item 13(a)(2) to Discuss Personnel Recommendations for Resignation for employees a, b, c, d, and e; and Agenda Item 13(b) to Discuss Matters Related to Release of Students for students 1 through 26.

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to accept the recommendation of Interim Superintendent Dennis R. Ulmer, Jr., and enter into negotiations with The Budd Group regarding Agenda Item 13(c)(1) Contractual Matters Regarding: Custodial Services.

With respect to Agenda Item 13(c)(2) Contractual Matters Regarding: Legal Services, Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion to enter into negotiations with Halligan, Mahoney & Williams.

15. **Board Member Comments**

- Trustee Tonya Sanders-Govan recognized Representative Justin Bamberg for his comments on the House floor in which he referenced Bamberg County and advocated for rural communities, children, and education. She encouraged continued advocacy for students within the district. Trustee Sanders-Govan also reminded parents, students, and community members that addressing concerns is a learning process and emphasized the importance of following the established chain of command when issues arise, escalating matters appropriately if needed. She further expressed her desire to support efforts to ensure that parents and students are informed and equipped with the information needed to be successful.
- Trustee Adrienne Blume hoped everyone had a pleasant Easter break and reminded students and parents that the school year is not yet over. She encouraged students to remain focused on their studies, maintain strong academic performance, and finish the year positively. Trustee Blume noted that Richard Carroll Elementary School held a Raiderthon event with strong volunteer participation and positive student engagement. She also seconded prior comments regarding the importance of following the chain of command to resolve concerns and noted that approximately six weeks remain in the school year before summer break.
- Trustee Jeni Bunch congratulated the spelling bee winners at Denmark-Olar Middle School and the Garden Club award recipients at Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School. She expressed appreciation for student involvement in extracurricular activities and commended faculty and staff for their support. Trustee Bunch echoed remarks regarding the final six weeks of the school year, encouraging students and staff to remain focused and finish strong. She shared that she is keeping students, teachers, and staff in her thoughts during this time.
- Secretary Cynthia Hurst thanked students who participated in the art contest and recognized the district's continued success in student artistic achievement. She also congratulated district athletic teams for their accomplishments. Secretary Hurst noted efforts to engage parents and students in discussions regarding academic progress and encouraged continued family involvement in student success. She emphasized that

there is still time remaining in the school year for students to improve academically. She concluded by noting that although difficult topics were addressed during the meeting, she was proud of the Board's focus on making decisions in the best interest of students.

- Trustee Harriet Coker thanked Interim Superintendent Dennis R. Ulmer, Jr., the administration, and district office staff for their assistance and support, including help with Zoom access. She extended encouragement to teachers and staff for the final weeks of the school year, noting that this period can be challenging. She encouraged everyone to remain strong and expressed appreciation for their continued dedication and hard work.
- Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg encouraged all faculty, staff, and students to continue performing well in their classes, particularly with testing approaching for some grade levels. She urged students to remain focused, do their best, and finish the school year with success. She also encouraged teachers to remain strong, acknowledged their efforts, and expressed appreciation for their hard work and dedication, noting that their efforts will be rewarded and thanking them for all they do.
- Trustee Cathy Griffin thanked teachers, staff, and administration for their dedication, noting that their efforts contribute to the success of the district. She stated that class sizes have increased and more students are choosing to attend Bamberg County School District, which she attributed to the positive work being done across the district. Trustee Griffin encouraged students to remain focused during the final weeks of the school year, emphasizing that each day is important. She acknowledged the challenge of maintaining routines as the school year winds down but encouraged students to finish strong and do their best. She extended best wishes to all students.
- Vice Chair Naomi Eckels thanked administration, students, staff, and all individuals who contribute to the success of the district. She congratulated students for their hard work and recognized student athletes for their strong performance in spring sports. She encouraged everyone to continue doing their best and expressed appreciation for their continued efforts and dedication.
- Board Chair David Corder noted that students have approximately 15 days remaining until testing, describing it as the district's "Super Bowl." He referenced the success of the district's championship basketball, football, and track teams and encouraged students to approach testing with the same level of commitment and excellence. He emphasized the importance of End-of-Course (EOC) and SC READY assessments and encouraged students to perform to the best of their ability. Chair Corder stated that testing is a matter of school pride and encouraged students to take pride in their school. He urged students to make their parents proud, remain focused, and do well on their assessments.

16. **Adjourn**

Trustee Cathy Griffin moved, and Vice Chair Naomi Eckels seconded, the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 9-0.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Minutes approved:

David Corder, Board Chair

Cynthia Hurst, Secretary