

**Bamberg County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Bamberg County School District Office
May 4, 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, 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 Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

4. **Approval of Minutes for April 13, 2026**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, to accept the April 13, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

5. **United Way – Allendale, Barnwell, & Bamberg Counties (ABB) Partnership Presentation by Ferlecia Cuthbertson**

Ms. Ferlecia Cuthbertson thanked the school district for supporting dual enrollment opportunities and congratulated the district on providing student-athletes with the resources needed for success. Ms. Cuthbertson also expressed appreciation to Dr. Simmons and Mr. Smith for allowing the JROTC Cadets to assist with distributing Food Share boxes to members of the community.

Ms. Cuthbertson explained that the United Way operates through community partnerships and highlighted several programs and services offered to support Bamberg County residents. She discussed the 2-1-1 program, which connects individuals and families with local community resources and services, as well as the UnitedABB Cares website, which provides information on accessing available Bamberg County resources. She further explained that the ALICE Program assists financially constrained families through grant opportunities while considering household size and income. In addition, she shared information regarding the LTRG/VOAD/COAD initiatives, which help the community prepare for and respond proactively to storm relief and disaster recovery efforts.

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

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

Interim Superintendent Dennis R. Ulmer, Jr. presented all school reports in the absence of the principals.

7. **Athletic Reports: Robert Williams**

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

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

Interim Superintendent Ulmer noted the following:

- a) Mr. Ulmer announced that it was Teacher Appreciation Week and thanked the teachers for all they do, recognizing that teaching is not a 9-to-5 job. He further recognized and commended the teachers for their continued support of students outside of the regular school day.

Mr. Ulmer also recognized the school nurses, noting that Wednesday was School Nurses Day, and thanked them for all they tirelessly do for students and staff. In addition, he acknowledged the school food service staff, as the previous Friday was Lunch Hero Day, and expressed appreciation for their continued dedication and service to the district's students.

- b) Mr. Ulmer recognized Lilly McLeod for being selected as a recipient of a CTEA Scholarship awarded by the South Carolina Career and Technical Education Administrators Association. The scholarship recognizes high school seniors who have successfully completed a Career and Technical Education program and are pursuing postsecondary education goals. Lilly was recognized for her achievement at the recent CTEA Roundtable meeting.
- c) Mr. Ulmer recognized several BCSD teachers for being selected as recipients of the 2026 Savannah River Nuclear Solutions Innovative Teaching Mini Grants. Award recipients included Alleyah Ransom, Allison Williams-Clark, Elizabeth Anderson, Robbie Barcelona, and Lara Buss for their innovative STEM and hands-on learning projects. BCSD was awarded a total of \$4,000 to support instructional materials, equipment, and classroom resources that enhance student learning experiences. Mr. Ulmer commended the educators for their dedication and commitment to providing innovative opportunities for students.
- d) Mr. Ulmer reported that Bamberg County School District will once again implement its Summer Lunch Program from June 1, 2026, through June 25, 2026, at Denmark-

Olar School, Richard Carroll Elementary School, and Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School. Free lunches will be available to all children 18 years of age and under. Appreciation was extended to the district's food service staff for their continued dedication to providing nutritious meals to students and the community throughout the summer months. It was also noted that additional sponsor sites may be considered pending required training and approval through the food service department.

- e) Mr. Ulmer provided an update on district enrollment, noting a total of 1,762 students as of April 1, 2026.

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

- a. Denmark-Olar High School JROTC – US Whitewater Center – Charlotte, NC – May 20, 2026 (Phillip Robinson, JROTC Instructor)
- b. Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School JROTC – US Whitewater Center – Charlotte, NC – May 20, 2026 (John McDonald, JROTC Instructor)
- c. Denmark-Olar FFA – SC FFA State Convention – Greenville, SC – June 16, 2026-June 18, 2026 (Bayleah Varnadoe, FFA Advisor)
- d. Denmark-Olar Boys Basketball Team – Team Camp Coastal Carolina University – Conway, SC – June 22, 2026-June 24, 2026 (Marcus Rivera, Head Basketball Coach)

Following a review of the requests for out-of-state and overnight travel, **Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded, to approve the following field trip requests: Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School JROTC and Denmark-Olar High School JROTC to attend the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, NC, on May 20, 2026; Denmark-Olar FFA to attend the SC FFA State Convention in Greenville, SC, from June 16–18, 2026; and the Denmark-Olar High School Boys Basketball Team to attend Team Camp at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, SC, from June 22–24, 2026.**

Vice Chair Eckels amended the motion to also include the Denmark-Olar High School JROTC Conduct Summer Training Camp at Fort Jackson, SC, from June 5–11, 2026, which had been inadvertently omitted from the agenda. The motion passed 9-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

10. **2026-2027 Continuing Resolution (Action Needed)**

Chief Finance Officer Devon Furr requested that the Board approve a continuing resolution for the 2026–2027 fiscal year to ensure continued district operations, as the state has not yet provided a finalized budget.

Following the presentation of the Continuing Resolution for the General Fund Operating Budget for the 2026–2027 School Year by Board Chair David Corder, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, to approve the Continuing Resolution for 2026–2027.** The motion passed 9-0.

11. **Monthly Financial Report**

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

Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved, and Trustee Jeni Bunch seconded, the motion to accept and approve the Financial Report for April 2026, as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

a. Approval of Fiscal Caution Financial Recovery Plan (Action Needed)

Ms. Furr presented the Bamberg County School District Fiscal Recovery Plan in response to the South Carolina Department of Education's Fiscal Caution, issued following an audit finding of unallowable activity in a major program related to ARP ESSER funding.

She reported that the district has implemented a comprehensive plan to strengthen internal controls, improve grant management practices, and ensure full compliance with all federal and state requirements. These actions are intended to ensure that financial resources are managed responsibly and transparently, and in a manner that maximizes student impact.

Implementation of the plan is currently underway, and the district remains committed to continuous improvement and maintaining the highest standards of fiscal responsibility.

Following review of the district's Fiscal Recovery Plan, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded, to accept and approve the Bamberg County School District Financial Recovery Plan as presented.** The motion passed 9-0.

Ms. Furr requested that the Board schedule a follow-up budget work session to continue the budget development process.

Following a brief discussion, the Board agreed to hold a budget work session on May 18, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

12. **Visitors' Comments**

None.

13. **Executive Session**

Board Chair David Corder called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin 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, and Matters Related to Release of Students.

Open session: Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker 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 Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion to accept and approve Agenda Item 13(a)(1) to Discuss Personnel Recommendations for Hire for employees a, b, and c; Agenda Item 13(a)(2) to Discuss Personnel Recommendations for Resignation for employees a, b, and c; and Agenda Item 13(b) to Discuss Matters Related to Release of Students for students 1 through 11.

15. **Board Member Comments**

- Trustee Cynthia Hurst mentioned a desire to revisit the use of “Thank You” cards for staff. She also recognized McKenzie Sanders, a senior at Denmark-Olar High School, for being awarded a scholarship from the Garden Club.
- Trustee Tonya Sanders-Govan recognized Denmark Technical College graduates, noting that there were 12 dual enrollment graduates—three from Bamberg and nine from Denmark-Olar—and commended them for earning college degrees or certificates through dual enrollment. She named the following students: Marvin Bryant, Devin Hammonds, Brianna Hayes, Mileaha Johnson, Mau’real Kimble, Kelaiah Lovett, Lilly McLeod, Keanu Odom, McKenzie Sanders, Trae Summers, De’marcus Wheeler, and Quinasia Wroten. She added that all graduates earned honors.
- Trustee Harriet Coker expressed appreciation in recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week for all teachers for their hard work and dedication. She also recognized school nurses in honor of National Nurses Day for their service and support.
- Vice Chair Naomi Eckels echoed the sentiments expressed by her colleagues and extended thanks to all teachers and nurses. She encouraged employees to “hold on” as the end of the school year is approaching and offered words of encouragement.
- Trustee Cathy Griffin expressed appreciation to those who have communicated with the Board and encouraged all employees to continue reaching out with any concerns.
- Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg recognized teachers and nurses in honor of their respective appreciation days and thanked them for their service. She encouraged students to remain focused, continue working hard, and finish the school year strong.
- Trustee Jeni Bunch echoed prior comments and expressed appreciation for staff efforts. She also recognized graduating seniors for their accomplishments and looked forward to seeing them at graduation.
- Trustee Adrienne Blume echoed comments made by fellow Board members and extended congratulations to seniors for a job well done. She also recognized teachers who received grants, noting appreciation for their outstanding work. She concluded with a lighthearted “May the 4th be with you.”
- Board Chair David echoed previous comments and expressed appreciation for the shared sentiments. He reflected on how quickly the school year passes and noted that this is an especially meaningful time for both seniors and teachers. He encouraged students by emphasizing the lasting value of their diploma and urged them to pursue their future goals in college, technical school, the military, or the workforce. He concluded by encouraging students to strive for success in life.

16. **Adjourn**

Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved, and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 9-0.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Minutes approved:

David Corder, Board Chair

Cynthia Hurst, Secretary