

Minutes of Barnwell County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, May 19, 2026
(10524 Marlboro Avenue, Barnwell, SC 29812)

Board Members Present: Becky Huggins, Rosey Anderson, Catrena Hughes-Parker,
Felicia Devore, 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 under New Business the approval of BHHS Future Business Leaders of America Conference to San Antonio, Texas June 28th-July 3rd be added to the agenda.

B. Approval of Agenda – Becky Huggins

A motion was made by Rosey Anderson to approve the agenda as presented with the Blackville-Hilda High School Future Leaders of America Field Experience request being added. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. Hearing no objections, the agenda was unanimously approved.

C. Approval of Consent Agenda Items – Becky Huggins

1. Approval of April 21, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of May 12, 2026 Board Work Session Minutes
3. Approval of May 12, 2026 Board Special-Called Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of May Personnel Report
5. Approval of March 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.

D. There was no public participation.

II. Special Recognition

A. Barnwell County School District IT Apprentices- Superintendent

Dr. Stapleton stated how exciting it was to recognize the BCSD IT Apprentice Program and the students who have participated in this opportunity throughout the school year. Programs like this help provide our students with real-world experience while allowing them to learn valuable skills alongside professionals

within our district. The district is so grateful for the leadership of our Technology Department and for the investment they make in helping prepare students for the future careers in technology and related fields.

Dr. Stapleton asked John Moody, IT Director, to come forward to introduce the apprentices who have worked in the IT department this year. John Moody began by thanking Barnwell County School District leadership for their support. He thanked the interns for their outstanding work and contributions this year and their dedication, determination, and willingness to learn. They had a meaningful impact on the department and the school district. He shared how we appreciate all the hard work that they contributed this year, and we wish them continued success in their future endeavors.

The IT Apprentices recognized were:

- Kimberly Cruz- Blackville-Hilda High School
- Elijah Greene- Barnwell High School
- Yug Patel- Williston-Elko High School

The IT Apprentices were presented with gifts from the IT Department (Kelli Johnson) and Barnwell County School District (Dr. Stapleton).

B. Barnwell County School District Retirees- Superintendent

Dr. Stapleton stated it is so hard to say good-bye to each retiree as they begin the next part of their journey, and the district would like to take a moment to recognize and celebrate the incredible individuals who are retiring from Barnwell County School District this year. She expressed that each retiree being honored has made a lasting impact on our students, school, and communities through years of dedication, service, and commitment to education. She shared that the district is deeply grateful for the difference they made in the lives of countless children and families across Barnwell County, and we wish each of them the very best in this next chapter of life.

Dr. Stapleton asked Shawn Williams, Chief Human Resources Officer, to come forward to lead the retiree recognition.

Shawn Williams stated on behalf of Dr. Stapleton, the Board of Trustees, and the entire Barnwell County School District family, she brings greetings. She recognized the retirees for the years, and some decades, of life that they have poured into the children and families. She expressed, "You showed up, you stayed early, you stayed late, and did the work whether anyone was watching or not. The work that you did together is what made our school feel like home. That legacy doesn't retire tonight, it actually stays with us, in every student you taught, every colleague you encouraged, and every life you touched along the way. Congratulations, and enjoy every well-earned moment of it."

Williams asked all retirees to come to the stage and sit in their rocking chairs being provided as retirement gifts by the school district. The following retirees were recognized by their building administrators or Dr. Stapleton:

- John Denny Bailey- Barnwell Elementary School
- David Ferguson- Barnwell County Career Center
- Brenda Johnson- Williston-Elko High School (not present)
- Cindy Kirby- Transportation
- Teresa Martin- Barnwell Elementary School

- Robbie Niegowski- Barnwell High School
- Lee Anne Owens- Macedonia Elementary/Middle School (not present)
- Rebecca Padgett- Barnwell Primary School
- Denise Parker- Barnwell Elementary School
- Cheryl Poole- Kelly Edwards Elementary School
- Lisa Sanders- Barnwell High School (not present)
- Vicky Thompson- Kelly Edwards Elementary School (not present)
- Ronnie Tobin- Barnwell County Career Center
- Lavonda Trottie- Kelly Edwards Elementary School
- Hermean Williams- Macedonia Elementary/Middle School

Please note the Board took a brief break for group photographs of retirees.

Superintendent Report- Superintendent

A. Updates Related to the BCSD Facility Plan

Dr. Stapleton gave the following update related to the BCSD Facility Plan

FEMA Gymnasium and Safe House Update

- At the May 12, 2026 work session, we were able to visit the FEMA gym project, and it is moving right along. The gym floor has now been installed.

Barnwell County High School

- We received our Land Disturbance Permit from the Department of Environmental Services last week for the new high school. The preconstruction meeting happened today. We are now planning the groundbreaking for June.

B. District Updates

Dr. Stapleton shared the following district updates:

- We are in the midst of so much happening within our schools. Part of that includes celebrating May as BCSD Staff Appreciation Month. That includes our appreciation for you, the school board, and we thank you all for what you do to support our schools, our students, and our staff.

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

A. Approval of Second Reading of the 2026-2027 Barnwell County School District General Fund Budget- Action Item

Dr. Stapleton recognized CFO Holly Hutto.

CFO Holly Hutto gave an overview of information shared at the May Special-Called meeting and presented the second reading of the budget.

FY 2026–2027 General Fund Budget – Second Reading

- Administration presented the proposed FY 2026–2027 General Fund Budget for second reading.
- The Board was reminded that the 2026–2027 school year is the first year since district consolidation that Barnwell County School District has the authority to increase the millage rate. The current millage rate is 261.1 mills.
- Based on calculations from the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, the district is permitted a millage increase of 3.25%, which equates to approximately 8 mills. If implemented, the millage rate would increase to 269.1 mills. It was noted that operating millage does not impact owner-occupied homes but does affect non-owner-occupied, commercial, and industrial properties.
- Revenue projections presented included:
 - Retiree Insurance: \$1,607,545
 - State Aid to Classrooms: \$16,747,350
 - Health Insurance: \$60,499
 - Transportation funding to be determined based on prior-year allocations.
- Administration reviewed state reimbursement revenues, including Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III reimbursements associated with residential tax exemptions and credits, with an estimated combined reimbursement exceeding \$5.5 million.
- Additional local and state revenues were reviewed, including Merchants Inventory Tax, Manufacturing Exemption Tax, Motor Carrier fees, FILOT revenues, federal reimbursements, and indirect cost transfers.
- Budget considerations included:
 - Ongoing state budget negotiations between the House and Senate.
 - Proposed state-funded teacher salary increases of \$2,000 across all salary schedule cells.
 - A proposed 2% increase to the state bus driver salary schedule.
 - No projected increase in employee health insurance premiums for the fourteenth consecutive year.
 - Continued challenges in balancing the budget due to unfunded mandates and salary increases.
- Administration reported that departments and schools participated in a collaborative budget process to identify needs for supplies and services. Funding recommendations were based on student enrollment, program offerings, special considerations, and overall district needs.
- The recommended FY 2026–2027 General Fund Budget totals **\$46,272,754**, with revenue sources consisting of:
 - Local Revenue: \$14,443,985 (31%)
 - State Funding and Revenue in Lieu of Taxes: \$28,957,835 (63%)
 - Federal Funding and Transfers: \$2,870,934 (6%)
- Expenditures are budgeted as follows:
 - Salaries and Benefits: \$40,747,347 (88%)
 - Purchased Services: \$3,369,224 (7%)
 - Supplies and Other Expenses: \$2,156,183 (5%)
- Administration recommended approval of the second reading of the FY 2026–2027 General Fund Budget in the amount of **\$46,272,754**.

Motion made by Catrena Hughes-Parker to approve the Second Reading of the 2026-2027 Barnwell County School District General Fund Budget. The motion was seconded by Felicia Devore. The motion was approved unanimously.

- B. Approval of Student A School of Choice Request- Action Item (action will be taken following Executive Session)
- C. Approval of Blackville-Hilda High School Future Business Leaders of America to attend convention in San Antonio, Texas June 28th-July 3rd pending funding.

Motion made by Felicia Devore for the approval of the Blackville-Hilda High School Future Leaders of America to attend a convention in San Antonio, Texas June 28th-July 3rd pending funding being available. The motion was seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Executive Session

Motion made to go into Executive Session by Rosey Anderson at 7:08 p.m. and seconded by Felicia Devore 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 School of Choice
 - Employee Contractual Matters
- Discussion of negotiations incident to contractual arrangements, specifically early site, construction, and utilities contract negotiations for construction of the new high school/career center
 - Update on Contractual Matters related to Pre-construction
- Receipt of legal advice, as needed, in regard to contractual agreements

Any action as required by Executive Session discussion.

Motion made to come out of Executive Session at 7:42 p.m. Motion made by Rosey Anderson and seconded by Catrena Hughes-Parker. The motion was approved unanimously.

Approval of Student A School Choice -Action Item

Motion made by Catrena Hughes-Parker to approve Student A School Choice Request. The motion was seconded by Felicia Devore. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. Adjournment

- A. Announcement of Next Meeting
Chair Huggins announced the next regular Board Meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at Barnwell Schools Administration Building.
- B. Meeting Adjournment
Chair Huggins asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Catrena Hughes-Parker and seconded by Rosey Anderson. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Chair

Betsy Higgins

Clerk

Rosey Anderson