

**Bamberg County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Bamberg County School District Office
August 3, 2026
6:00 p.m.**

Members present: Board Chair David Corder, Vice Chair Naomi Eckels, Secretary Cynthia F. Hurst, Trustee Gwendolyn D. Bamberg, Trustee Jeni Bunch, Trustee Harriet H. Coker, Trustee Tonya A. Sanders-Govan, and Trustee Cathy Ayer Griffin.

Absent: Trustee Adrienne C. Blume

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 Cathy Griffin seconded, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 8-0.
4. **Approval of Minutes for July 6, 2026**
Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded, to accept the July 6, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed 8-0.
5. **Federal Programs Report Update – Dr. Rhonda Ray, Federal Programs Director**
Federal Programs Director, Dr. Rhonda Ray, provided an update on the district’s federal programs and their preliminary allocations for FY 2027.

Title I-Preliminary Allocation: \$1,223,569.94

All Bamberg County schools will be served. Funds will support instructional supplies for students, parent and family engagement activities, onsite counseling services, the district social worker, supplemental instructional supplies, and a digital platform utilized by teachers to differentiate instruction.

The plan has been submitted to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) for approval. The district has not yet received notification of approval and may not receive an update until September or October.

Title II-Preliminary Allocation: \$105,396.46

Funds will support teacher professional development activities, with an emphasis on job-embedded training. Title II funds will also support tuition reimbursement for teachers completing alternative certification programs and reimbursement for teachers who

successfully pass the Praxis examination, supporting the district's efforts to recruit and retain quality teachers. The plan has been submitted to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and has not yet been approved.

Title III- Allocation TBD by the South Carolina Department of Education

There is no preliminary Title III allocation for FY 2027. The district's allocation for the previous year was slightly more than \$2,000.00. Title III funds support language instructional materials, parent and family engagement activities, and teacher professional development to support multilingual learners..

Title IV-\$93,365.58

The Title IV plan is not due until August 31, 2026; however, the district has already held meetings to discuss the proposed uses of the funds. Funds are planned to support supplemental related arts supplies across grade levels, college and career readiness through classroom kits, and a district site license providing student safety and health and wellness modules for students to complete online. Funds will also provide opportunities for the district social worker, guidance counselors, and technology coach to attend conferences.

Title V – Allocation TBD by the South Carolina Department of Education

The Title V plan is not due until November 2026; therefore, the district expects to receive its allocation after to that date. Funds will be used to support instructional supplies, staff development, and technology resources.

Perkins and State Equipment Funds – Allocation TBD by the South Carolina Department of Education

Funds will be used at the high school level to support Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs, including equipment updates and upgrades to classroom kits for the various programs.

Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)

Dr. Ray reported that, as previously mentioned, the middle-level grades (6–8) at Denmark-Olar K-12 School previously received an allocation. The district has since been notified that additional funds have been allocated. Meetings will be held to discuss the additional funding and determine how the funds will be utilized.

6. Student/Staff Recognition and Superintendent's Report

Interim Superintendent Ulmer noted the following:

- a) Mr. Ulmer recognized today as the first day of the 2026–2027 school year and reported that he had visited schools throughout the district. He noted that the school year had gotten off to a smooth start and that the school buildings looked good. Mr. Ulmer thanked administrators and teachers for their efforts in ensuring a successful opening and expressed his appreciation to the bus drivers for getting up early and safely transporting students. He also thanked parents for their support and noted the strong turnout and participation at the schools' open houses.

- b) Mr. Ulmer advised that the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) was sponsoring its annual “Welcome Back” initiative and invited board members to participate in a group photo in support of the initiative.
- c) Mr. Ulmer concluded by giving an update on district enrollment, reporting a total of 1,754 students as of the August 3, 2026.

7. **Second Reading – BCSD Policy – Section A – District Wellness:**
a. ADF – District Wellness

Mr. Ulmer presented policy ADF for second reading.

After extensive discussion, **Trustee Harriet Coker moved, and Trustee Jeni Bunch seconded, to approve the second reading of Policy ADF – District Wellness, as presented.** The motion passed by a vote of 7–1, with Secretary Cynthia Hurst abstaining from the vote.

8. **Second Reading – BCSD Policies – Section J – Students:**
a. JFAB – Admission of Nonresident Students (Interdistrict Transfer)
b. JFAB-R – Admission of Nonresident Students (Interdistrict Transfer)

Mr. Ulmer presented policies JFAB and JFAB-R for second reading.

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, to accept the second reading of Policies JFAB – Admission of Nonresident Students (Interdistrict Transfer) and JFAB-R – Admission of Nonresident Students (Interdistrict Transfer), as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

9. **Revision of 2026-2027 District Calendar (Action Needed)**

Mr. Ulmer informed the board of an oversight in the previously approved 2026–2027 school calendar. He advised that, because 2026 is an even-numbered election year, Election Day, November 3, 2026, would need to be observed as a school holiday. He recommended adjusting the October inclement weather days by changing October 7, 2026, to a regular school day; designating October 8, 2026, as a professional development day; and retaining October 9, 2026, as an inclement weather day.

After hearing Mr. Ulmer’s recommendation, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Jeni Bunch seconded, to approve the recommended changes to the 2026–2027 school calendar.** The motion passed by a vote of 8–0.

10. **Visitors’ Comments**
None.

11. **Executive Session**

Board Chair David Corder called for a motion to enter Executive Session. **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded, the motion to enter Executive Session.** The motion carried 8-0.

Board Chair David Corder noted that the Board would be moving into Executive Session to accept Legal Advice in Relation to the Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract for the 2026-2027 School Year, to discuss Personnel – Budget 2026-2027, 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 Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion for the board to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular session of the meeting. The motion carried 8-0.

12. **Action on Executive Session Items**

With respect to Agenda Item 11(a) To Accept Legal Advice in Relation to the Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract for the 2026-2027 School Year, Trustee Jeni Bunch moved, and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to authorize the Board Chair, in consultation with the district's legal counsel, to enter into an agreement with Dennis Ulmer confirming the terms of his assignment as Interim Superintendent. The agreement provides that, effective July 1, 2026, Mr. Ulmer will receive an additional monthly supplement of \$2,100.00, a monthly automobile allowance of \$600.00, and an additional 3% of his salary to be placed into an annuity for the duration of his service as the district's Interim Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 8-0.

In relation to Agenda Item 11(b), To Discuss Personnel – Budget 2026–2027, Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of the district's 2026–2027 budget, totaling \$27,120,779.59. The motion passed by a vote of 8-0.

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to approve Agenda Item 11(c)(2), to Discuss Personnel Recommendations for Resignation, for employee c. Vice Chair Naomi Eckels amended her original motion to correct the employee designation from employee c to employee a. Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded the amended motion to approve Agenda Item 11(c)(2), to Discuss Personnel Recommendations for Resignation, for employee a. The motion passed 8-0.

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Cathy Griffin seconded, the motion to approve Agenda Item 11(d), to Discuss Matters Related to the Release of Students, for Students 1 through 15. The motion passed by a vote of 8-0.

With respect to Agenda Item 11(c)(1) to Discuss Personnel Recommendation for Hire, no action was taken.

13. **Board Comments**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst recognized and congratulated Hampton Jowers, a Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School student, for placing first among all eighth-grade participants in the

National Garden Club's Recycled Art Sculpture Contest. She noted that Hampton received first place at the national level.

Trustee Cathy Griffin reported that she had visited the schools in Denmark and Bamberg to observe the cleanliness and maintenance of the facilities. She stated that, overall, she was very satisfied with the condition of the schools and noted that staff appeared to be pleased with the new custodial agency. Trustee Griffin also spoke with several custodial employees, who generally expressed satisfaction with the direction of the custodial services, while acknowledging that the transition has presented some challenges. Overall, she reported that the feedback was positive.

Trustee Jeni Bunch congratulated everyone on successfully completing the first day of school and thanked the teachers, faculty, and staff for their efforts in making the opening of the school year a success. She expressed her opinion that the district was off to a great start.

Trustee Harriet Coker wished everyone the best of luck and expressed her hope for the best school year ever.

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels welcomed everyone back and thanked everyone for their sacrifices and hard work during the short summer break. She expressed her appreciation to the teachers, staff, and administrators for everything they did to prepare for the new school year. She wished everyone a successful 2026–2027 school year, noting that although the school year had gotten off to a rainy start, she hoped it would be a great year for everyone.

Trustee Tonya Sanders-Govan had no comment.

Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg echoed her colleague's sentiments and welcomed everyone back.

Board Chair David Corder acknowledged that there may be mixed emotions regarding the start of the school year but expressed confidence that everyone would soon get back into the routine and that, for some, it would feel as though they had never left. He expressed his appreciation for the work completed over the summer by district office staff, principals, and custodians and expressed hope that the district would have one of its best years ever. He encouraged teachers to hold students accountable and principals to hold teachers accountable, emphasizing that the district's primary purpose is to educate students and help provide them with a better future.

14. Adjourn

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Vice Chair Naomi Eckels seconded, the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 8-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Page 6 of 6

August 3, 2026

Minutes approved:

David Corder, Board Chair

Cynthia Hurst, Secretary