

Minutes of Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees
Work Session
Monday September 28, 2026

(770 Hagood Avenue, Barnwell, SC 29812)

Board Members Present: Becky Huggins, Felicia Devore, Rosey Anderson, Catrena Hughes-Parker (Absent: John Melton)

Work session began after the ribbon-cutting event ended for the FEMA Safe Rom and Gymnasium.

I. Opening Business

A. Call to Order, Reflection, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, FOI Notice

Chair Becky Huggins called the meeting to order at 11:19am. Chair 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.

B. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Rosey Anderson to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Felicia Devore. Hearing no objections, the agenda was unanimously approved.

II. Information Items

A. Professional Development Moment – State and Local Financial Protocols

CFO Holly Hutto led professional development on the district's financial protocols and procedures, providing updates to the board members and answering any questions regarding the district's implementation of the policies approved by the School Board.

B. Debrief of Today's Event and Recent Safety Training

Dr. Stapleton led a debriefing of the day's ribbon-cutting ceremony. The discussion provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on what went well, identify any challenges or concerns, and share suggestions for improvement. Emphasis was placed on using feedback and lessons learned to strengthen planning for future district events and activities.

Dr. Stapleton led a debriefing of the recent multiagency active assailant training, sharing staff survey results and feedback collected following the exercise. The discussion included a review of the district's current safety preparedness efforts, ongoing training initiatives, and additional measures being implemented as part of the district's Comprehensive Safety Plan. Emphasis was placed on continuous improvement, collaboration with emergency response agencies, and ensuring staff are prepared to respond effectively in emergency situations.

C. Discussion of Key District Priorities

Dr. Stapleton led a discussion regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in Barnwell County School District. The discussion included a review of key AI-related

statistics, an introduction of the recently formed BCSD AI Governance Team, and an overview of the district's proposed philosophy for the responsible and effective use of AI. Dr. Stapleton also shared a proposed timeline for developing district procedures and policies to guide AI use across the district.

Dr. Stapleton led a discussion of several key district priorities and ongoing initiatives. Topics included the district's internal audit system designed to support accountability and continuous improvement; the monthly Leadership Focus Series conducted with principals and department heads to strengthen leadership capacity; ongoing employee recruitment and retention efforts; and the district's bus driver trainee program aimed at developing qualified drivers and addressing transportation staffing needs.

D. Discussion of District Updates

Dr. Stapleton led a discussion regarding district updates and ongoing efforts to strengthen communication and engagement. Topics included the monthly Board Update, the district's continued emphasis on communication with staff, and opportunities for teacher voice and feedback through the Teacher Advisory Council and Teacher Forum. Dr. Stapleton also highlighted the district's October "Adopt a Principal" initiative, designed to show appreciation for school principals during National Principals Month.

E. Discussion of Updates regarding Facility Plan

Contractual agreements were discussed during Executive Session.

III. **Executive Session**

A motion was made to enter Executive Session at 1:20pm for the purposes outlined on the agenda following a short break. The motion was made by Catrena Hughes-Parker and seconded by Felicia Devore. There was no discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The Board entered Executive Session at 1:20pm for the purpose of:

*As needed to discuss any contractual agreements currently in place for the district or discussion of negotiations incident to contractual arrangements in regard to agenda items.
As needed to discuss any confidential employee or student matter in regard to agenda items.*

At 2:42pm, Rosey Anderson made a motion to come out of Executive Session, and Catrena Hughes-Parker seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. **Adjournment**

A. Meeting Adjournment

At 2:43pm, Felicia Devore made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Rosey Anderson. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 2:43pm.

Please Note: Lunch was served during discussion of Key District Priorities and District Updates, and the Board continued meeting through lunch.

Chair



Clerk

