

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Barnwell School District 45 Board of Trustees

TIME: 6:00 p.m., Thursday, March 14, 2024

PLACE: Barnwell Schools Administration Building, 770 Hagood Avenue, Barnwell, SC 29812 for Board Members

PRESENT:

Board of Trustees: Rosey Anderson, Chair; Felicia Devore, Vice-chair; Dr. Rhett Richardson, Clerk

District Office: Crystal Stapleton, Superintendent; Tina Smith, Administrative Assistant; Kelly Shealy, Curriculum Support
Holly Hutto, CFO; John Moody, IT Director

The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

I. OPENING BUSINESS

- A. Chair Rosey Anderson called the meeting to order. Chair Rosey Anderson delivered the reflection. Dr. Rhett Richardson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Superintendent Stapleton announced that local media had received notice of the meeting as required by the Freedom of Information Act.
- B. The Board unanimously approved the agenda. Motion was made by Felicia Devore and seconded by Dr. Rhett Richardson.
- C. The Board unanimously approved the consent agenda items. Motion made by Dr. Rhett Richardson and seconded by Felicia Devore.
- D. There was no hearing of the public.

II. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

A. Recognition

1. Superintendent Stapleton recognized GBMS Science Fair Winners. *It is always a wonderful time when we can recognize the students for the work they have done. Mr. Alex Kinard, one of our GBMS Science teachers, is always so energetic and eager to implement opportunities for our students. Whether it is writing grants, coordinating the science fair or ordering materials for our STEM lab, he is always stepping forward and is such an amazing educator.*

a. Mr. Alex Kinard, GBMS Science Teacher, who expressed that one of his passions is to bring content to life, came forward to recognize the Science Fair winners that were in attendance. He thanked Superintendent Stapleton, GBMS administration support, the school board and the community because what is done couldn't be done without them.

- Ryan Von- 1st place in Behavioral Science and 3rd place overall
- Noah Hutson- 1st place in Animal Science
- Emily Hankins- 1st place in Thermal Science and 2nd place overall

Dr. Rhett Richardson expressed how proud he was of the winners and how he always enjoyed looking at the different science projects and the ingenuity that they all have. He asked what kind of food or bait Noah Hutson used for the mice, and Noah replied peanut butter, sunflower seeds, and blue cheese. When asked which one they liked better, he stated that they liked the sunflower seeds but liked the peanut butter the best.

Felicia Devore congratulated the students on their hard work and acknowledged the long hours that they put in to working on their projects. She encouraged them to continue to do well, while also acknowledging that the board members have seen some of them in other awards, as well. She congratulated them again on their hard work and thanked the science teacher for all the hard work he puts in, as well.

Chair Anderson congratulated the students and thanked the parents. She also expressed appreciation for Ms. Williams for the support that she has given to Mr. Kinard.

B. Information

1. Superintendent Stapleton presented district updates:

- BPS Auditorium sound system will be installed by the end of March 2024.
- Awning work is being scheduled for BHS, BPS, and GBMS
- BPS gym floor restoration will begin next week.
- BHS gym floor repair will begin following BPS gym floor.
- New doors phase III near completion, and painting will take place over spring break.
- HVAC projects are complete and awaiting inspections.
- Fire alarm installation is taking place at BHS.
- Bid opening took place for Career Center on Wednesday.

FEMA Grant- Safe House and Gymnasium

- Since this building permit was issued approximately 2.5 years ago, we will need to follow the guidelines as provided in the Office of School Facilities (OSF) Guidebook.

2023 OSF Guidebook:

If advertising is delayed longer than six months after initial approval of construction documents by the OSF, the design professional must request in writing a new permission to advertise. The design professional must certify that no changes have been made to the original contract documents or must resubmit revised contract documents for review and approval.

- Tetra Tech is currently conducting a thorough review of all plans for code issues. During the OSF review, Tetra Tech will be reengaging with agencies that had been identified previously, including but not limited to SCDOT, Fire Marshal, and the City of Barnwell.

Timeline: Our Tetra Tech Project Manager predicts early to mid-April being able to release the RFP and mid-May as the timeframe for opening bids.

2. Superintendent Stapleton presented Barnwell County School District Consolidation Update

Facility Plan- Phase II

- A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural/Engineering Services and a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Construction Management At-Risk Services with a deadline for receiving proposal responses within two weeks were released. These were advertised January 26th and due February 12th.
- A district committee will conduct a bid opening and narrow down proposals to “shortlist of firms” for interviews. The board members will choose from these firms in securing services. The short list was published on February 23rd. The presentations and interviews took place on March 8th.
- During the presentation and interview, the firms have been asked to address the following items:
 - Safety record and safety plan.
 - Experience working with small rural school districts with limited funding.
 - Strategies for utilizing local vendors and positively impacting the local community.
 - Cost-saving measures to efficiently manage the district’s budget while maintaining quality.
 - Detailed communication plans from planning, design, and construction to project completion.
- Each presentation was allotted 30 minutes, with an additional 10-15 minutes for questions from the board members at the end.
- At the close of the special-called meeting, the board approved unanimously for Superintendent Stapleton to enter into negotiations with SSOE as the Architect/Engineering firm and HG Reynolds for the Construction Management at Risk Services.
- Quotes from insurance companies have been received from property and casualty insurance and SCSBIT (South Carolina School Boards Insurance Trust) will be the insurance company for BCSD beginning July 1, 2024. Finance and Operations will continue to work with SCSBIT to make sure there is a smooth transition.

- Finance has started the process with PEBA to transfer all current employees from all districts to the new district on July 1, 2024. The CFO has sent in the initial paperwork to establish our district code for insurance and retirement. PEBA has asked each district (45, 48, 80) to upload a roster of current employees to them no later than May 1, 2024. The CFO will continue to monitor to make sure this deadline is met.
- Our CFO has started on the budget for 24-25 by pulling the current budgets from all three districts to begin the process of what will be combined and determining if any additional RFPs need to go out to combine services.
- Throughout March, we will be completing our collaborative budget process by setting up meetings with each department head and principal to discuss their locations and budget needs for the 2024-2025 school year. This is a critical step prior to bringing a proposed budget to the Board for approval.
- Numerous collaborative meetings continue to happen weekly.
- Our IT departments have been meeting regularly. Most recently, representatives from both districts met to discuss IT needs- specifically online enrollment applications, PowerSchool, and the new website. The PowerSchool meetings for the transition of our data systems are still occurring weekly. There is an official Barnwell County PowerSchool database now.
- The website for the new district is now live. www.bcsd.net
- Pierson Collective started the video process for the recruitment video. Kelly Shealy and Dr. Stapleton took the crew around the county to get video footage of the different districts. The first sample of the video has been sent, but it is not ready to be seen yet. The video crew is coming back in April to work on a Barnwell 45 farewell video to be able to encompass what Barnwell 45 has meant to so many people. We are looking at bringing back retired teachers, but that will be happening in April.
- School Choice – presented at the November and January board meetings.
 - The School of Choice application and guidelines were previously approved for the new district’s School of Choice option.
 - Enrollment numbers will be determined during the application process, so we can ensure there is room for students/families requesting intra-district transfers. The application window opened March 12th and applicants may apply by 11:59 p.m. on April 7, 2024. The online application is available on the homepage until the application closes on April 7th.

Who does not apply for BCSD School Choice?

- Employees of Barnwell County School District do not complete school choice applications, unless going to a different feeder school than the school in which the employee works.
- Families do not have to re-apply for the next year if they are already enrolled in a given school.
- Current out-of-district students will be “grandfathered in” for BCSD School Choice and do not need to apply.

Chair Anderson asked if this was just applied to students in the county? Superintendent Stapleton replied that this is just for the county and anyone outside of the Barnwell School District counties will have to apply and there will be tuition associated with their enrollment.

- School Choice applications will close at a specified date and will not be accepted after the deadline, except for extenuating circumstances. The district will develop and have in place a process to allow transfers for extenuating circumstances. Out of district students will still have to be approved by the school board for enrollment.
- Incoming Kindergarten students whose siblings attend a feeder school through BCSD School Choice will be automatically enrolled in the same feeder school.
- Early Childhood Programs.
 - Our Chief Academic Officer, Debra McCord, has confirmed with the State Department that we may have a multiage Montessori classroom as an expansion of the CERDEP programs currently in place.
 - BSD45 has requested from the state funding for an additional CERDEP classroom that would serve both 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. We are currently in our Montessori enrollment process and there’s always a waiting list. This is pending funding approval. This classroom would use

the Montessori approach as their curriculum and serve ten 4-year-olds and ten other multi-age students (students either 3 or 5 years old).

- BCCSD expanded their CERDEP programs at Macedonia Elementary/Middle School in the Fall. This additional classroom will continue to operate and serve students. Twenty students is the cap for CERDEP classes.
- Approval of New English Language Arts 2024 Instructional Materials Adoption
 - After attending the Instructional Materials Caravan, ELA representatives from across the county met together with Kelly Shealy, Daphne Still and the curriculum departments from Williston and Blackville to determine the ELA materials for the newest adoption.
 - The materials were chosen from materials already approved by the State Department of Education. ELA materials for the new district can now be ordered.
 - Materials were chosen as grade spans (K-6, 6-8, 9-12), and teacher representatives from each different level across the county participated in the caravan and the decision-making process.
- Dr. Stapleton shared that the Board has had the Second Reading of proposed policies Sections C and Section D. Several policies from the following sections were approved:
SECTION C- GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
SECTION D- FISCAL MANAGEMENT

First readings of the rest of the policies from the following section were approved:
SECTION D- FISCAL MANAGEMENT

In March, the remainder of SECTION D and SECTION G- PERSONNEL for the first reading will be presented.

III. New Business

Superintendent Stapleton explained New Business (Action Item)

On June 19, 2023, the First Steps Reauthorization Act, Act No. 81 went into effect upon Governor McMaster's signature. A section of that law outlines the structure of First Steps local partnership boards. Superintendent Stapleton explained that the district has always had someone serve on that board, but it was someone that was designated. Now, with the changes to the law, the district needs to get that officially approved. Dr. Carter-Blocker has been serving on that board several years and representing Barnwell School District 45. Dr. Stapleton expressed that the district is very appreciative of everything that Barnwell County First Steps does and all of the work they do to support our students and families. She let the Board know that the Executive Director of Barnwell County First Steps, Tricia Gordon, was present to answer any questions that they may have.

1. Motion for Approval of BSD45 Appointee to the Barnwell County First Steps Partnership Board (Action Item)
Motion made by Felicia Devore to approve Dr. Vickie Carter-Blocker as the Barnwell School District 45 Appointee to the Barnwell First Steps Partnership Board and seconded by Dr. Rhett Richardson. (Approved unanimously)

Richardson- I want to again thank Mr. Kinard. That is a lot of work and kind of what I call "off the clock work." You are very dedicated to the students and that is much appreciated. Ms. Williams, thank you. I know you had a part in that, as well. I want to express condolences to Tina Smith on the passing of her father. She wears a lot of hats and she does them very well and she is much appreciated. Also I wanted to mention the passing of Tim Moore. There was a lot that Tim did for Barnwell 45, some that people know about, but a lot that people didn't know. Very sad, the passing of Mr. Moore. I know he served on the State Board of Education, and he loved Barnwell 45. He's going to be dearly missed. Thank you to Holly and Kelly for your hard work. You see just a portion of what Dr. Stapleton does and I am always amazed at her work being the superintendent of district 45 and guiding us. It's amazing that she does the county board and the Barnwell 45 board, and I can't think of anyone else that could do that. Very thankful for what you do for Barnwell 45 and the county board.

Devore- I would like to congratulate all the students on their awards for the science fair and Mr. Kinard for all your hard work. Also, I hear Dr. Stapleton talk about what she does for the consolidated district and district 45, my mind gets boggled just thinking about it. As Rhett said there's probably no one else that could take on the task as big as this, and we appreciate all that

you do. Holly, all of the work. Ms. Shealy, for your part in everything. We appreciate all the hard work, and we are so glad to have you all in our corner.

Anderson- I agree with everything that they said. Parents, without you, we wouldn't have the students. Students, we appreciate all the hard work that you do. Teachers and administrators, we appreciate you as well. District office staff, I don't know how you keep up and when you rest. Dr. Stapleton, I look at all you give us for our updates, and then you give us the consolidated board's updates. It's overwhelming. The Spring sports have geared up. We have JV and Varsity, and there's some games going on tonight. Please get out and support these athletes. They are students first and athletes second. Please show your support to them, as well.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no need for Executive Session.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Board unanimously approved the adjournment of the meeting. The motion was made by Dr. Rhett Richardson and seconded by Felicia Devore at 6:38 p.m.

Chair Rosy Anderson

Clerk Walter Richardson