

Bamberg School District One
Minutes of Regular Meeting of Board of Trustees
Richard Carroll Elementary School
April 27, 2021
6:30 p.m.

Members present: Board Chair Janeth Walker, Vice Chair John Hiers, Trustee Gwendolyn Dianne Bamberg, and Trustee Naomi Eckels.

Absent: Secretary Tony E. Duncan

1. **Call meeting to order:** Board Chair Janeth Walker 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 and the Bamberg School District One Website have been notified of the time, date, place and agenda of this meeting.

2. **Administering the Oath of Office to Board Members Naomi Eckels (Seat 3) and John Hiers (Seat 4)**

Ms. Devon B. Furr, Director of Finance, administered the Oath of Office to Mrs. Naomi Eckels, re-elected board member of Seat 3, and Mr. John Hiers, re-elected board member of Seat 4.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Naomi Eckels seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 4-0.

4. **Approval of Minutes for March 15, 2021 and March 24, 2021**

Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved and Trustee Naomi Eckels seconded to accept the March 15, 2021 and March 24, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed 4-0.

5. **School Reports: Stacey Walter, Denise L. Miller, and Dennis R. Ulmer.**

Hand-outs: School Reports (Reviewed by Principals/Assistant Principal)

- Richard Carroll Elementary School – Principal Stacey Walter
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School – Principal Denise Miller
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School – Assistant Principal Jordan Smith in the absence of Principal Dennis Ulmer

6. **Athletic Report: Robert Williams**

In the absence of Coach Robert Williams, Interim Superintendent Dottie Brown reviewed the athletic report as presented. [Board Packet Enclosure]

Handout: Senior “Athletic Signings”

Interim Superintendent Brown extended special thanks to the Athletic Director and all the coaches who are very involved in helping the young people achieve these accomplishments. Also, to the parents who have been supportive through all the years.

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

Interim Superintendent Brown noted the following:

a) **Update: COVID-19 Vaccinations**

Approximately 60% to 70% of the district's staff have been fully vaccinated.

b) **Workers' Compensation Trust**

The SC School Boards Insurance Trust voted unanimously on March 18, 2021, to return \$5M from the Workers Compensation Trust to members. Ms. Furr, Finance Director, will be notified on how much will be allocated back to this District.

c) **Virtual District Program and Regulation Waiver Request**

Mrs. Brown noted that the motion that was put forth at the February 22, 2021, Board Meeting omitted one of the regulations numbers. Inadvertently, grades K-5 were not included in the original motion. Therefore, Mrs. Brown asked the Board to once again make a motion for the administration to seek a waiver for offering a virtual program to include grades 4 through 6 (Regulation 43-231(II), 43-231 (II)(A) for the next school year.

Mrs. Brown noted that in order to get students back in the classroom, the Governor has signed into law that school districts must offer five-day face-to-face instruction for the remainder of this school year and next school year. With that, school districts have the choice of offering a virtual program. This district has opted to do so because this district does have some extenuating situations which makes it necessary for students to attend virtually. However, the Governor and Mrs. Spearman have given districts the authority and right to develop their rules. Parents will have to complete an application if they wish for their child to attend virtually next year and there will be eligibility criteria for students.

Mrs. Brown noted that in reference to the Salkehatchie Consortium virtual program, this District has decided not to participate. Instead, the District will do its own. The principals of Bamberg 1 and Bamberg 2 had a joint district meeting and drafted a comprehensive virtual program. However, the District's program is aligned with the Consortium district's plan. After doing a cost analysis with Finance Director Devon Furr and the Superintendents in the Consortium, it was agreed that it would be more economically advantageous for this district to offer its own virtual option program next school year. Also an issue is that teachers who work for the Consortium program would no longer be employed by their original districts. It is believed that students of this district would be better served by the staff of this district. Mrs. Brown noted that members of this Board will receive a hard copy of the virtual program once it is completed.

Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded that the Board approve the Interim Superintendent's recommendation that the District provide a virtual school program for grades 4-12. It was further moved that to facilitate the District's virtual program, the Board authorizes the Interim Superintendent to request waivers from the State Board of Education for the seat time and school day length requirements contained in South

Carolina Regulation 43-231(II) and 43-231 (II)(A) regarding K-5 instruction. The motion carried 4-0.

Mrs. Brown recognized and extended thanks to Ms. Annie Walters from Blackville, South Carolina, and the SAVE the Children Foundation for doing the things that they do for the children in this community. The foundation donated hand soap, hand sanitizers, Play-Doh, books, and miscellaneous toys to the students and their families.

A “shout out” was given to Ms. Larkin Hiott, ELA teacher at Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School, and her students. The students in English IV just completed their reading of Mary Shelley’s gothic novel, *Frankenstein*, despite initial misgivings (college level novel). The sophomore students in English II class recently completed their research methods unit, a unit that culminated in student-crafted TED Talk presentations. The students are now able to engage in sharp critical debate regarding the inherent responsibilities at the heart of scientific discovery. Students selected a topic of their choice and conducted careful research to become “experts” on the facts of their subject matter, as well as the misconceptions associated with their chosen topics. Baley Bazzle investigated the various psychological effects of bullying on the adolescent mind, Shanya Bannister tackled the murky statistics of human trafficking in South Carolina, and Kenny Grant analyzed group perceptions associated with behaviors deemed “respectful” in particular social groups and how these perceptions shape social interpretations of different groups.

Mrs. Brown noted that she and the district’s administrators have agreed not to continue with “The Leader in Me program” at Richard Carroll Elementary School based on the program review data, student achievement data, and the overall ongoing cost of the program. Also considered was the burden on parents and the community regarding the required fundraising activities for TLIM. The school has begun implementing Action-Based Learning, which is a whole child approach to improving the health, wellness, and education of all children. Action Based Learning teaching methodology will be the new focus.

8. Draft: 2021-2022 School Calendar

Mrs. Brown reviewed for first reading a draft copy of the 2021-2022 School Calendar. She noted that the calendar was developed in collaboration with Denmark District Two and Orangeburg School District.

Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded to approve the draft 2021-2022 School Calendar for first reading. The motion passed 4-0. [Board Packet Enclosure]

9. Consolidations Updates

The District received notification from Mrs. Mollie Spearman of the State Department of Education that the District’s Consolidation Plans have been approved.

10. Shared Services Updates

Mrs. Brown noted that the District is continuing to work with the personnel and Interim Superintendent of Bamberg School District Two to recognize areas of expanding Shared

Services. The District is working on ways to combine services and save money on both sides.

11. **Monthly Financial Report**

Finance Director Devon Furr presented the Financial Report for FY 2020-2021 as of February 2021, for review. [Board Packet Enclosure and Handout]

Ms. Furr noted that Bamberg School District One has been named as the fiscal agent for the Consolidation Plan.

Ms. Furr noted that the District received the first part of the allocation from the State Department in the amount of \$1,562,500.00.

Ms. Furr reviewed an update on the Pupil Activity Account. She presented three proposals – two would need Board approval.

- 1) To move funds from the Education Foundation to cover some necessities of the Athletic Account. [Board Approval Needed]
- 2) To move funds from accounts that have a balance to accounts that are overspent within each school per conversation with the Principal. [No Board Approval]
- 3) To use one general athletic account to cover the normal operations of the program. Allow fundraising accounts to cover camps and other needs of sports. [Board Approval Needed]

Mrs. Brown noted that the changes that are proposed makes spending equitable. Some sports generate a lot of money and some generate hardly any. The sports that are able to support themselves can help support the other sports that cannot support themselves.

Ms. Furr also noted that the Athletic Director will be able to set up a budget for each sport. Funds from concessions goes into the General Athletics Account. However, there are some sports which may be allowed to operate concessions and use the money for fundraising.

Ms. Furr noted that the District is on “Fiscal Watch” due to fund balance issues from the District’s audit. The District’s fund balance fell just below the required three months of operations due to some costly expenses -- including roofing and heating issues. A recovery plan outlining the corrections to fix the issues must be approved by the Board and submitted to the State Department by May 30, 2021.

Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded to approve the recommendations for items #1 and #3 on the Pupil Account Update as listed. The motion passed (4-0).

Ms. Furr noted that in reference to the Budget, the House and Senate Budget has not been passed. The Senate will be giving \$16.00 more on the Student Base Cost. The District’s biggest concern is salaries for retirees.

Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved and Trustee Naomi Eckels seconded to accept the Finance Report for March 2021, as presented. The motion passed 4-0.

12. **Visitors' Comments**

Mr. Ken Ahlin inquired about who makes the COVID rules for the schools, inquired about the District 1 and District 2 (May 3rd) Board Meeting not being open to the public and if there is a weather policy when school is cancelled.

Mrs. Brown responded by stating that the rules for COVID come from DHEC and they are passed to the school nurses. She also stated various things determine the closing of school. The District receives advice from the County's Emergency Management Director. Other factors include high winds and bus operations.

Board Chair Walker noted that in response to Mr. Ahlin's inquiry about the meeting between District 1 and District 2 that the scheduled meeting has an open session, but a portion will be in executive session.

13. **Executive Session**

Board Chair Janeth Walker called for a motion to enter Executive Session. **Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Naomi Eckels seconded to enter the Executive Session.** The motion carried (4-0).

Board Chair Janeth Walker noted that the Board would be moving into Executive Session to discuss Contractual Matters, Personnel Recommendations for Hire, Personnel Recommendations for Resignations, and Student Transfer Requests.

Open session: Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved and Trustee Naomi Eckels seconded for the Board to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular session of the meeting. The motion carried 4-0.

14. **Action on Executive Session Items**

Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded for the Board to approve Agenda Item 13 (a) Contractual Matter, a Memorandum of Agreement for shared services between Bamberg School District One, Bamberg School District Two and Barnwell School District 45, and Agenda Item 13 (b) Personnel Recommendations for Hire the employees #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, and #8, and Agenda Item 13 (c) Personnel Recommendations for Resignations for employees #1, #2, and #3, and Agenda Item 13 (d) Student Transfer Requests for students #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, and #8 as presented. The motion passed 4-0.

15. **Adjourn**

Trustee Naomi Eckels moved and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Minutes approved:

Janeth Walker, Board Chair

Tony E. Duncan, Secretary