

**Bamberg County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Bamberg County School District Office
February 3, 2025
6:00 p.m.**

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

Absent: None.

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, 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**

Trustee Harriet Coker moved and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

4. **Approval of Minutes for January 6, 2025**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded to accept the January 6, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

5. **School Reports: Shannon Johnson, Patricia Moultrie-Goldsmith, Deonia Simmons, Mandy Edwards, Denise Miller, and Jordan Smith. Hand-outs: School Reports (Reviewed by Principals/Assistant Principals)**

- Denmark-Olar Elementary School –Principal Shannon Johnson
- Denmark-Olar Middle School – Principal Patricia Moultrie-Goldsmith
- Denmark-Olar High School Principal -- Deonia Simmons
- Richard Carroll Elementary School – Principal Mandy Edwards
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School – Principal Denise Miller
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School – Principal Jordan Smith

Superintendent Dottie Brown presented all school reports in the absence of principals.

6. **Athletic Reports: Robert Williams**

Superintendent Dottie Brown reviewed the athletic report as presented for Bamberg County School District in the absence of Athletic Director Robert Williams. [Board Packet Enclosure]

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

Superintendent Brown noted the following:

- a) Dr. Brown provided a summary of the PowerSchool data breach, informing the board that Bamberg County School District has sent notifications to all parents, students, and staff regarding the incident. PowerSchool is also actively in the process of notifying impacted individuals and has initiated corrective measures, including offering two years of credit monitoring for those affected. Dr. Brown assured the board that the district is adhering to established protocols and is collaborating closely with the South Carolina Department of Education to address the situation.
- b) Dr. Brown expressed her gratitude to Mr. John Huber-McNealy, Managing Director of the Meeting Street Scholarship Fund; Dr. Deonia Simmons, Principal of Denmark-Olar High School; and Mr. Jordan Smith, Principal of Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School, for their collaboration in hosting the Meeting Street Scholarship Fund program on January 31, 2025. Dr. Brown noted that Bamberg County School District was one of fourteen schools selected to participate in the scholarship fund and emphasized that students who meet the five established criteria are eligible to receive an award that matches the Life Scholarship. Dr. Brown further expressed her appreciation to Superintendent Ellen Weaver for taking time out of her busy schedule to attend the event.
- c) Dr. Brown reminded the school board members that their Statement of Economic Interests must be filed by March 15, 2025.
- d) Dr. Brown announced that the suggested date for updated board member photographs was February 21, 2025. However, after some discussion, it was noted that board training was already scheduled for that date. Therefore, alternative dates will need to be arranged.
- e) Dr. Brown concluded with a summary of the enrollment data as of January 29, 2025, reporting a total student enrollment of 1,799 across the district. Dr. Brown explained that the district had eight early graduates, which contributed to the decline in enrollment.

8. **Discussion of Local Board Waiver for Weather-Related School Closures (Action Required)**

Dr. Brown provided a handout summarizing the district's closure days due to weather and other related circumstances, advising that all five of the district's eLearning days had been exhausted. She further noted that the previously scheduled intercession days, February 20, 2025, and February 21, 2025, were now being used as make-up days. Dr. Brown indicated that board action was required to determine how to address the closure on January 24, 2025. She explained that the board had two options: either to waive the day or to vote to make up the day, specifying when they would like the make-up day to occur.

After a brief discussion, **Trustee David Corder moved and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to make up the January 24, 2025 closure day on February 19, 2025.** The motion passed 9-0.

9. **Update/Discussion of Proposal for Moving 6th Grade from Richard Carroll Elementary School to Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School (Action Needed)**

Dr. Brown distributed a summary of the architectural requests for proposals (RFPs) received, in accordance with board direction, for bids on constructing a 6th grade wing at Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School. Dr. Brown informed the board that the bids ranged from \$4,054,834.38 to \$8,754,837.00. She noted that these bids were significantly higher than anticipated and exceeded the scope of the current budget for the project. Dr. Brown presented several options for the board's consideration: to table the matter indefinitely, revisit it at a later date, or consider the option of utilizing portable classrooms.

Dr. Brown also reminded the board of the unexpected expense related to the gym floor repair at Denmark-Olar Middle School, which has further impacted the district's budget for this project.

After discussing the available options, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved and Trustee David Corder seconded, the motion to table this project at the present time, but to revisit the issue until August of 2025.** The motion passed 9-0.

10. **Elective Course Approval:**

- a. **Assigned Supervision (379921CW or 379921CH)**
- b. **College & Career Preparation I (379985CH)**
- c. **Work Experience (379925CH)**
- d. **Action Based Learning – Grade: Pre-Kindergarten (17992504)**
- e. **Action Based Learning – Grade: Kindergarten (17992500)**
- f. **Action Based Learning – Grade: 1st (17992501)**
- g. **Computer Learning – Grade: Pre-Kindergarten (17994044)**
- h. **Computer Learning – Grade: Kindergarten (17994000)**
- i. **Computer Learning – Grade: 1st (17994001)**
- j. **Computer Learning – Grade: 2nd (17994002)**
- k. **Computer Learning – Grade: 3rd (17994003)**
- l. **Computer Learning – Grade: 4th (17994004)**
- m. **Computer Learning – Grade: 5th (17994005)**
- n. **Computer Learning – Grade: 6th (17994006)**

Superintendent Brown introduced the proposal to offer the following courses as electives for Bamberg County School District: Assigned Supervision, College & Career Preparation I, Work Experience, Action Based Learning – Grade: Pre-Kindergarten, Action Based Learning – Grade: Kindergarten, Action Based Learning – Grade: 1st, Computer Learning – Grade: Pre-Kindergarten, Computer Learning – Kindergarten, Computer Learning – Grade: 1st, Computer Learning – Grade: 2nd, Computer Learning – Grade: 3rd, Computer Learning – Grade: 4th, Computer Learning – Grade: 5th, and Computer Learning – Grade: 6th as elective courses for Bamberg County School District.

Following the proposal, **Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to approve the following courses as electives for Bamberg County School District: Assigned Supervision (3779921CW or 379921CH), College & Career Preparation I (379985CH), Work Experience (379925CH), Action Based Learning – Grade: Pre-Kindergarten (17992504), Action Based Learning –**

Grade (17992500): Kindergarten, Action Based Learning – Grade: 1st (17992501), Computer Learning – Grade: Pre-Kindergarten (17994044), Computer Learning – Kindergarten (17994000), Computer Learning – Grade: 1st (17994001), Computer Learning – Grade: 2nd (17994002), Computer Learning – Grade: 3rd (17994003), Computer Learning – Grade: 4th (17994004), Computer Learning – Grade: 5th (17994005), and Computer Learning – Grade: 6th (17994006) as elective courses for Bamberg County School District. The motion passed 9-0.

11. Request for Out of State/Overnight Trips:

- a. Bamberg-Ehrhardt Wrestling – Individual Wrestling Championship – Florence, SC – February 21, 2025 – February 22, 2025 (Terrell Haynes, Wrestling Coach – BEHS)**
- b. ProStart Management Team – Competition – Spartanburg, SC – March 2, 2025-March 4, 2025 (Kathy Hunt, CTE Teacher -- BEHS)**
- c. HOSA – State Leadership Conference – Charleston, SC – March 5, 2025-March 7, 2025 (Teresa Huber, HOSA Advisor -- BEHS)**
- d. CTE/Business Computer Science Teachers – EDCon 2025 – Rosemont, IL - -- June 16, 2025-June 18, 2025 (Contrilla Anderson & Blanch Johnson, CTE Teachers – BEHS)**

Following a review of the requests for out of state/overnight trips, **Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved and Secretary Cynthia Hurst seconded, the motion to approve the following requests: Wrestling Coach Terrell Haynes’ request for Bamberg-Ehrhardt Wrestling to attend the Individual Wrestling Championship in Florence, SC, from February 21, 2025, to February 22, 2025; CTE Teacher Kathy Hunt’s request for Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School’s ProStart Management Team to attend a competition in Spartanburg, SC, from March 2, 2025, to March 4, 2025 (pending return of student waivers); HOSA Advisor Teresa Huber’s request for HOSA to attend the State Leadership Conference in Charleston, SC, from March 5, 2025, to March 7, 2025; and the professional development request from CTE Teachers Contrilla Anderson and Blanch Johnson to attend EdCon 2025 in Rosemont, IL, from June 16, 2025, to June 18, 2025. The motion passed 9-0.**

12. First Reading – BCSD Policies – Section E – Support Services:

- a. ECAH – Unmanned Aircraft Systems “Drones”**
- b. ECAH-R – Unmanned Aircraft Systems “Drones”**
- c. EEBA – District-Owned Vehicles**
- d. EEBA-R – District-Owned Vehicles**

Dr. Brown presented policies ECAH, ECAH-R, EEBA, and EEBA-R for first reading. Ms. Charlotte Schlamp was also present to assist in answering any questions regarding the clarification of regulations related to policies ECAH and ECAH-R.

After a brief discussion, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policies ECAH – Unmanned Aircraft Systems “Drones”, ECAH-R – Unmanned Aircraft Systems “Drones”, EEBA – District-Owned Vehicles, and EEBA-R – District-Owned Vehicles,**

as presented, with corrections to the grammatical errors involving double negatives in Policies EEBA and EEBA-R. The motion passed 9-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

13. **First Reading – BCSD Policies – Section I – Instruction:**
 - a. **IKD-R – Honor Rolls**
 - b. **IKE – Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students (Revision)**

Dr. Brown presented policies IKD-R and IKE for first reading.

After a brief discussion, **Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policy IKD-R – Honor Rolls, as presented.** The motion passed 9-0. [Board Packet Enclosure]

Further, **Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of Policy IKE – Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students, as presented.** The motion passed 9-0. [Board Packet Enclosure]

14. **Annual Title 1 Review – BCSD Policy – Section K – School-Community-Home Relations: (Action if Needed)**
 - a. **KB – Parent and Family Engagement in Education**

Dr. Brown advised that, in accordance with Title I requirements, Policy KB – Parent and Family Engagement in Education is subject to an annual review by the school board. Dr. Brown further explained that as part of this process, Federal Programs Director Dr. Rhonda Ray instructed principals and the technology department to ensure that Bamberg County School District’s existing Policy KB was posted on both the school and district websites, providing parents with an opportunity to offer input. The policy was made available online on January 17, 2025, with an initial deadline for feedback set for January 23, 2025. However, due to inclement weather, the deadline was extended to midday on February 3, 2025.

Dr. Brown reported that several recommendations for policy changes were received, including adding “district-wide” to the third bullet on the first page and changing “sixth” grade to “eighth” grade on the last page.

Dr. Brown further noted that the remaining feedback consisted of questions related to the policy. Dr. Ray and other district staff are currently in the process of creating a Q&A document to address all submitted questions, which will be distributed to those who submitted inquiries, the board, and the general public once it is finalized.

Following the discussion of parental input and review of the policy, **Trustee David Corder moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to approve the first reading of policy KB – Parent and Family Engagement in Education with suggested changes of adding “district-wide” to the policy and changing “sixth” to “eighth” grade.** The motion passed 9-0. [Board Packet Enclosure]

15. **Monthly Financial Report**

Chief Financial Officer Devon Furr presented the Financial Report for Bamberg County School District for FY 2024-2025 as of January 2025, for review. [Board Packet Enclosure]

After an inquiry from Trustee Jeni Bunch regarding the budget, Ms. Furr briefly explained the process. She advised that the process begins with the principals discussing their needs, which initiates the budgeting process. Following this, the board will schedule a budget work session to provide input on the budget. The budget must be passed by the June meeting to ensure the district has a budget to operate from starting July 1st. However, if the state has not passed a budget by June 30th, the board will need to pass a continuing resolution to allow the district to work off the current year's budget until the state budget is finalized.

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded the motion to accept and approve the Financial Report for January 2025, as presented. The motion passed 9-0.

16. **Board Member Requests:**

- a. **Formal Request from Trustee Tonya Sanders-Govan
Two-Year Student Demographics Report and Two-Year Enrollment
Trends Report Request for District 5 Students**

Board Chair Janeth Walker explained the process for board member requests and reiterated that any formal request made by a board member must be presented to the entire board, as the request must be acted upon collectively. Mrs. Walker reminded the board members that when seeking information, they must act in their official capacity as board members, and the request must be made collaboratively by the board. She also advised that the board must consider the amount of staff effort required to fulfill such requests, as it diverts staff from their existing responsibilities. Additionally, she emphasized that the board should consider the ultimate purpose for which the information will be used.

After considering this information, Trustee Tonya Sanders-Govan rescinded her request, and, as a result, no action was taken on this agenda item.

17. **Visitors' Comments**

None.

18. **Executive Session**

Board Chair Janeth Walker called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to enter Executive Session. The motion carried 9-0.

Board Chair Janeth Walker noted that the Board would be moving into Executive Session to discuss Employment/Personnel: Personnel Recommendations for Hire, Personnel Recommendations for Resignation, and Discussion of Release of Students.

Open session: Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg 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 9-0.

19. **Action on Executive Session Items**

Vice Chair Naomi Eckels moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded the motion to accept and approve Agenda Item 18 (a) (2) Personnel Recommendations for Resignation for employees a, b, and c. The motion passed 9-0.

Board Chair Janeth Walker addressed, Agenda Item 18 (a) (2) Personal Recommendations for Resignation, stating that Superintendent Dottie Brown had formally notified the Bamberg County School District Board of Trustees for her decision to retire as district superintendent, effective at the close of business on June 30, 2025. The board accepted Dr. Brown's resignation with heartfelt thanks for her leadership, professionalism, and dedication to our students and community. Mrs. Walker acknowledged that Dr. Brown had served the newly consolidated district since the merging of Bamberg One and Bamberg Two three years ago. The board will use the coming months to prepare for and conduct a search for the next superintendent. Mrs. Walker also urged the Bamberg County School District Community to support the board's efforts as we enter this transition period, and further advised that additional information will be provided in the upcoming weeks.

There was no action taken on Agenda Item 18 (a) (1) Personnel Recommendations for Hire or Agenda Item 18 (b) Discussion of Release of Students.

20. **Adjourn**

Secretary Cynthia Hurst moved, and Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg seconded, the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 9-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Minutes approved:

Janeth Walker, Board Chair

Cynthia Hurst, Secretary