

Williamsburg County School Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 17, 2014 – 6:00 P. M.
Board/Staff Development Meeting Room
423 School Street - Kingstree, South Carolina

Members Present: Rev. Alfred Darby, Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr., Dr. Linwood Cooper, Mrs. Gladys Dorsey, Mr. Joseph Lee, Mrs. Barbara McKenzie, and Dr. Kerry Singleton

Others Present: Dr. Yvonne Jefferson-Barnes, Dr. Bernice Cooper, Mr. Glen Kennedy, Mr. Stanley Brunson, Mrs. Claire Murdoch, Ms. Erica Barcus, Mr. Lee Roy Campbell, Mrs. Roberta Cumbee, Mr. Mark Easterling, Mrs. Delaney Frierson, Dr. Janice Gamble, Mr. Levi Keith, Ms. Crystal Lottig, Mrs. Berlinda Mack, Ms. Angela McClary-Rush, Mrs. Carrie C. Brock, Dr. Kenneth Burgess, Ms. Clara Faye Dozier, Ms. Shanta Hanna, Mr. Floyd Keels, Ms. Bonnie King, Ms. Betty Lawson, Dr. Fred Moore, Ms. Judy Morris, Ms. Desaphine Nesmith, Mr. Boykin Parson, Attorney Vernie Williams, Ms. Lorraine Wilson, Ms. Michaelae Duke, and Mrs. Joann Fulton

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Joseph Lee, Chair.

Moment of Silence

All persons were asked to observe a Moment of Silence; and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by Mrs. Barbara McKenzie and seconded by Rev. Alfred Darby to adopt the agenda. The motion was carried unanimously (5-0). The Chair did not vote.

Swearing-In of Newly Elected Board Members

Attorney Williams swore in newly elected Board Members, Mrs. Gladys Dorsey, Rev. Alfred Darby, Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr., and Dr. Linwood Cooper.

Election of Board Officers

Attorney Vernie Williams, who was asked to conduct the Election of Board Officers, opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair.

Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. nominated Rev. Alfred Darby. A motion was made by Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. to close the nominations on Rev. Alfred Darby. There were no objections. The motion was carried unanimously, (7-0). Rev. Alfred Darby was declared Board Chair by acclamation.

Rev. Darby opened the floor for nominations for Board Vice-Chair.

Dr. Kerry Singleton nominated Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. A motion was made by Mr. Joseph Lee to close the nominations on Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. There were no objections. The motion was carried unanimously (7-0). Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. was declared Board Vice-Chair by acclamation.

Rev. Darby opened the floor for nominations for Board Secretary.

Dr. Kerry Singleton nominated Dr. Linwood Cooper. A motion was made by Mr. Joseph Lee to close the nominations on Dr. Linwood Cooper. There were no objections. The motion was carried unanimously, (7-0). Dr. Linwood Cooper was declared Secretary by acclamation.

Public Comment:

Ms. Desaphine Nesmith, from the Brown/Battery Park Elementary Development Center stated that she sent a letter (via email) to Board Members requesting the lease of the former Battery Park School Property, building and grounds, to be remodeled and used for community recreational purposes, service to the gifted and disadvantaged persons, and afterschool programs.

Ms. Shanta Hanna, a Williamsburg County School District parent, said she spoke with a teacher and principal about the grade updates (on the computer) for her child. She stated school personnel were to contact her, but as of that date she had not received a response. Ms. Hanna then informed the Board that she had contacted the State Department of Education the week before regarding the situation.

Rev. Henryhand asked Ms. Hanna to present to him in writing the identity of the persons at the school with whom she had spoken, along with the date and time so that he could get a better understanding of the situation.

Mr. Boykin Parson, a retired Williamsburg County School District employee, congratulated newly elected and returning Board Members; and asked them to be prayerful and thorough as they considered matters regarding students, staff and parents of the school district.

Ms. Clara Faye Dozier, Director of Disabilities and Special Needs, stated that she received information via email that the district's rating was "Good". She congratulated students, teachers, the administration and the Board on a job well done.

Mr. Floyd Keels, CEO of Santee Electric Cooperative, told Board Members that he appreciated what had been accomplished with test scores. He stated, "There is no way the community can move forward without a good education." Mr. Keels said the future depended on Board Members' decisions, and prayed that decisions would be made in the best interest of students.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mrs. Barbara McKenzie and seconded by Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. to approve the minutes from the October 27, 2014, Regular Board Meeting. The motion was carried unanimously, (6-0). The Chair did not vote.

INFORMATION ITEMS

WCSD Student Attends Girls Symposium

The Board congratulated and presented a Certificate of Recognition to Amoira Rush, a 9th grade student at C. E. Murray High School, who was selected and attended the 2014 Empowering Girls Symposium, sponsored by Clemson University, on November 14, 2014, at the Columbia Conference Center. The WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) office paid her conference registration fee.

WCSD Student Named Class A Special Team Player by SC Football Coaches Association

Board Members presented a Certificate of Recognition to and congratulated Martin Bufkin, a senior football player at C. E. Murray High School, for being selected as a Class A Special Team Player of the Year in Kick-Off Return, by the South Carolina Football Coaches Association.

WCSD Social Studies Teachers Receive the South Carolina Social Studies Palmetto Teacher of Excellence Award

Three WCSD Social Studies Teachers, Mr. Timothy Fitzwater (CEM), Ms. Ardrina Wise (KMS), and Mrs. Amelia Marsh (HES) were nominated by the Social Studies Director for the SC Council (SCCSS) for the Social Studies Teacher of Excellence Award for their grade spans. Nominations were based on the teachers' classroom performance and overall test scores in the 2013-2014 school year. Board Members presented each teacher with a plaque provided by SCCSS.

WCSD School Named Preseason #1 in Region A Boys' Basketball

Board Members presented a Certificate of Recognition to Mr. Levi Keith on behalf of the Hemingway High School Boys' Basketball team, for being selected pre-season #1 in Region A, by the South Carolina Basketball Coaches Association.

Curriculum and Instruction

School and District Report Cards – Ms. Crystal Lottig, Director of CCEL, provided information on the 2013 Report Card ratings, which she noted showed significant gains. She also responded to questions and concerns from Board Members.

Dr. Singleton said there was confusion with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) vs State reporting systems, and asked which should the Board believe?

Dr. Bernice Cooper stated both had been examined and are presented as any other conflicting information; and that the subcategories were reviewed.

Dr. Singleton stated that he researched the State Department of Education's website and looked at some of the comments that were made by State Superintendent, Dr. Mic Zais. He read the following quote from Dr. Zais, "I am pleased that teachers and students, administrators and parents have contributed greatly to the improvements we've seen this year. However, having separate Federal and state report cards has been confusing with each having a difference performance method. Moving to one accountability system and just one annual report card will make it easier for everyone to understand how the school district is performing. I call on the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to ensure that this new system is weighted heavily toward the guidelines of the Federal Report Card rather than the current State Report Card. This is because the Federal Report Card is far more rigid and holds schools to a higher performance standard in a science grade that conveys a clear message to the public, the parents, in how to make this inference." Dr. Singleton said, "My point is; it's time to be real with the deal."

Dr. Bernice Cooper said that Dr. Zais would be replaced by Ms. Molly Spearman as State Superintendent in January 2015, thus changing the administration.

Dr. Jefferson-Barnes said the ESEA assessment is not sound, because the formula for calculating the grade changes from year to year. She also noted the State of Florida and other states refused to use the ESEA Waiver, stating that the instrument is flawed.

Student Services

Information relevant to Student Services was included in the Board Agenda packet. Dr. Brian McKnight addressed questions and concerns.

Rev. Henryhand asked Dr. McKnight to explain the "0%" dropout rate. Dr. McKnight said he did not have the answer at that time, but would provide an answer at a later date.

Administrative Services

Information relevant to Administrative Services was included in the Board Agenda packet.

Finance

Mr. Stanley Brunson, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Expenditure and Revenue Statements to Board Members.

Rev. Darby asked Mr. Brunson about the financial condition of the district; and Mr. Brunson responded that WCSD was stable.

Dr. Singleton asked if all retirees were being paid at 80%; and Mr. Brunson responded yes, to his knowledge.

Rev. Henryhand asked about delinquent taxes. Mr. Brunson said he did not know; that when the county collects delinquent taxes, the money would be sent to the school district.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Act 155 Diploma Petitions

A motion was made by Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. and seconded by Dr. Linwood Cooper to accept the administration's recommendation to approve ACT 155 Diploma Petitions presented to the district. The motion was carried unanimously, (6-0). The Chair did not vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Mr. Joseph Lee and seconded by Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. to convene in Executive Session to discuss items listed on the agenda.

A. Discussion of Election, Transfer, Termination, Retirement and/or Resignation of Staff

B. Legal Update

1. Personnel Matter
2. Facilities/Furniture/Appliance Requests

Dr. Kerry Singleton asked that the records state that under Executive Session–Item A, the Superintendent's contract would be discussed.

The motion was carried unanimously, (6-0). The Chair did not vote. The Board convened in Executive Session at 7:18 p. m.

OPEN SESSION

A motion was made by Mr. Joseph Lee and seconded by Dr. Kerry Singleton to convene in Open Session to vote on any matters per Executive Session discussion. The motion was carried unanimously, (6-0). The Chair did not vote. The Board convened in Open Session at 9:04 p. m.

A motion was made by Dr. Linwood Cooper and seconded by Mr. Joseph Lee to accept the administration's recommendation to accept the resignation of the following personnel for the 2014-2015 school year: Ms. Meredith Green and Ms. Latetia Staggers. The motion was carried unanimously, (6-0). The Chair did not vote.

A motion was made by Dr. Linwood Cooper and seconded by Mr. Joseph Lee to accept the administration's recommendation to employ the following personnel for the 2014-2015 school year: Ms. Reagan Miles, Ms. Celissa Ann Roberts, Mr. Richard Watts, and Ms. Sheila Watts. The motion was carried unanimously, (6-0). The Chair did not vote.

Attorney Vernie Williams read the following statement from Dr. Yvonne Jefferson-Barnes:

November 17, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to inform you that I am resigning in lieu of being terminated. I believe the Board has breached my contract and I reserve the right to bring legal action.

Sincerely,
Yvonne Jefferson-Barnes, Ed.D.
Superintendent

A motion was made by Dr. Kerry Singleton and seconded by Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. to accept the resignation of Dr. Yvonne Jefferson-Barnes. Five members voted in favor of the motion: Dr. Linwood Cooper, Rev. Alfred Darby, Mrs. Gladys Dorsey, Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr., and Dr. Kerry Singleton. Two members opposed: Mr. Joseph Lee and Mrs. Barbara McKenzie. The motion was carried, (5-2).

A motion was made by Dr. Kerry Singleton and seconded by Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. to appoint Mrs. Carrie C. Brock as Interim Superintendent effective immediately, and that she be paid at the daily rate of pay equivalent to \$100,000 annually, and be provided the same benefits of all district employees. Five members voted in favor of the motion: Dr. Linwood Cooper, Rev. Alfred Darby, Mrs. Gladys Dorsey, Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr., and Dr. Kerry Singleton. Two members opposed: Mr. Joseph Lee and Mrs. Barbara McKenzie. The motion was carried, (5-2).

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Rev. W. C. Henryhand, Sr. and seconded by Dr. Kerry Singleton to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried unanimously, (6-0). The Chair did not vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p. m.

Submitted by: 

Date: January 26, 2015

Board Secretary: 

Date: 1 - 26 - 2015