

Bamberg County School District
Board of Trustees Meeting
Bamberg County School District Office
October 7, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Members present: Board Chair Janeth Walker, Vice Chair Beverly Bonaparte, Secretary Naomi Eckels, Trustee Gwendolyn D. Bamberg, Trustee Harriet Coker, Trustee John L. Hiers, Trustee Blossom Thompson, and Trustee Cynthia “Cindy” F. Hurst

Absent: Trustee Tonie Holman

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 Cynthia Hurst moved and Trustee Blossom Thompson seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

4. **Approval of Minutes for September 9, 2024**

Trustee Blossom Thompson moved and Trustee Cynthia Hurst seconded to accept the September 9, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

5. **Presentation to Bamberg County School District Students for Participation in the Residential Scholars Summer Program: Ms. Zaria O’Bryant, SC Governor’s School of Science and Mathematics**

Ms. Zaria O’Bryant of the SC Governor’s School of Science and Mathematics presented plaques to Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School for Kanaz Wroten and Denmark-Olar Middle School for Laila Kearse and QuaNaë Raysor all being chosen and participating in the GoSciTech Residential Scholars Summer Program. The plaques contained empty nameplates for students who may be chosen to attend in the future.

6. **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 – Assistant Superintendent Denny Ulmer in the absence of Principal Shannon Johnson
- Denmark-Olar Middle School – Principal Patricia Moultrie-Goldsmith
- Denmark-Olar High School – Assistant Superintendent Denny Ulmer in the absence of Principal Deonia Simmons

- Richard Carroll Elementary School – Assistant Superintendent Denny Ulmer in the absence of Principal Mandy Edwards
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt Middle School – Principal Denise Miller
- Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School – Assistant Superintendent Denny Ulmer in the absence of Principal Mandy Edwards

7. **Athletic Reports: Robert Williams**

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

Mr. Ulmer recognized Tristian Jenkins from Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School and Reginald Youmans from Denmark-Olar High School for being chosen at WJBF's Scholar Athletes.

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

Superintendent Brown noted the following:

- a) Dr. Brown thanked all faculty and staff for their hard work before, during, and after Hurricane Helene.
- b) Dr. Brown further thanked the students, families, and community member partners for their support during this time also.
- c) Dr. Brown remembered Ms. Yvonne Singleton, Denmark-Olar High School Teacher who passed unexpectedly. Dr. Brown asked everyone to please remember Ms. Singleton and her family in their prayers, as she will be greatly missed.
- d) Dr. Brown congratulated Bamberg County School District's 2024-2025 District Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Heather Palmer. Dr. Brown thanked Mrs. Palmer for her hard work and dedication to the district.
- e) Dr. Brown recognized Bamberg County First Steps on receiving a grant to support early childhood education and/or health and fitness initiatives. Dr. Brown continued to thank First Steps for their support of the students and their families in the community.
- f) Dr. Brown concluded with a summary of the enrollment data as of October 3, 2024 advising the total number of student enrollment across the district was currently at 1,820.

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

Dr. Brown presented the board with the South Carolina Department of Education's Memo dated October 1, 2024 regarding school calendars and eLearning: Response and Support Following Hurricane Helene. Dr. Brown advised that school districts have three days that are required to be built into their calendar to be used as make-up days and that Bamberg County School District has already designated those days for days missed due to Hurricane Debby at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. Dr. Brown further advised every school

district has 5 e-Learning days and Bamberg County School District has already used one day for e-Learning due to a water issue in Denmark.

Dr. Brown continued by advising that local school boards may grant a waiver for up to three missed days by a majority vote, but only after the district has made up at least three full days. Dr. Brown asked the board for their pleasure in entertaining a local waiver at this time for the two days missed due to Hurricane Helene, leaving one day for a future waiver, if needed.

After an extended discussion, **Trustee John Hiers moved and Secretary Naomi Eckels seconded to waive two days for the weather-related closures.** The motion passed 8-0

10. **Request for Out of State/Overnight Trips:**

- a. Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School FFA – Marine & Fisheries Specialty Camp – SC Leadership Center – North Myrtle Beach, SC –October 10, 2024-October 13, 2024 (Russell Henderson, FFA Advisor)
- b. Lady Vikings Basketball Team – MLK Basketball Tournament – Greenville, SC – January 18, 2025 – January 19, 2025 (Terence Jones, Coach)
- c. 2025 National ESEA Conference – Austin, TX – February 18, 2025-February 21, 2025 (Professional Development requested by Dr. Rhonda Ray, Federal Programs Director)

Following a review of the requests for out-of-state trips, **Trustee Harriet Coker moved and Vice Chair Beverly Bonaparte seconded to approve the request for Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School’s FFA to attend the SC Leadership Center in North Myrtle Beach, SC, October 10, 2024-October 13, 2024; the request of Federal Programs Director, Dr. Rhonda Ray, to attend the 2025 National ESEA Conference in Austin, TX, February 18, 2025-February 21, 2025.** The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

There was no action taken on request for out-of-state trip 10b, as the request was withdrawn prior to the board meeting.

11. **First Reading – BCSD Policies – Section J – Students:**

- a. JICJ – Prohibition of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day
- b. JICJ-R – Prohibition of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day

Superintendent Brown presented policy JICJ for first reading. Superintendent Brown advised there would be no action requested or needed for Item 11b at this time.

After brief discussion, **Vice Chair Beverly Bonaparte moved and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded to approve for first reading of Policy JICJ – Prohibition of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day.** The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

12. **First Reading – BCSD Policy – Section K – School-Community-Home Relations:**

- a. KF-E(1) – Request of Use of School Facilities Form

Superintendent Brown presented policy KF-E(1) for first reading.

After brief discussion, **Trustee Harriet Coker moved and Trustee Blossom Thompson seconded to approve for first reading of Policy KF-E(1) – Request of Use of School Facilities Form.** The motion passed 8-0. [Board Packet Enclosures]

13. **Monthly Financial Report**

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

Ms. Furr further presented the board with an Amended 2024-2025 Budget and Administrative Salary Scale for approval.

Trustee John Hiers moved and Trustee Cynthia Hurst seconded to accept and approve the Financial Report for September 2024, the Amended 2024-2025 Budget, and Administrative Salary Scale, all as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

14. **Visitors' Comments**

Mrs. Sharon Carter introduced herself as a candidate running for State Senate seat. It was at this time that Board Chair Janeth Walker stopped Mrs. Carter and advised that the school board was non-partisan and she could not proceed. Mrs. Carter further went on to state that she has been allowed to speak before other boards, to which Mrs. Walker reminded her that they were not other boards and that no politically related discussions would be brought forward in this arena since the board was again non-partisan. Mrs. Carter conceded by advising the board knows what she stands for and that she cares about education. Mrs. Carter concluded by thanking the board members for their service.

15. **Executive Session**

Board Chair Janeth Walker called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Secretary Naomi Eckels moved and Trustee Blossom Thompson seconded to enter Executive Session. The motion carried 8-0.

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, Discussion of Release of Students, and Discussion of Superintendent Evaluation.

Open session: Trustee Gwendolyn Bamberg moved and Vice Chair Beverly Bonaparte seconded for the Board to come out of Executive Session and return to the regular session of the meeting. The motion carried 8-0.

16. **Action on Executive Session Items**

Trustee John Hiers moved and Trustee Cynthia Hurst seconded to approve Agenda Item 15 (a) (2) Personnel Recommendations for Resignation for employee a, Agenda Item 15 (b) Discussion of Release of Students for student 1, and approving the Board Chair to execute the Superintendent's Annual Performance Evaluation as presented. The motion passed 8-0.

There was no action taken on Agenda Item 15 (a) (1) Personnel Recommendations for Hire.

17. **Adjourn**

Vice Chair Beverly Bonaparte moved and Trustee Blossom Thompson seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 8-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Minutes approved:

Janeth Walker, Board Chair

Naomi Eckels, Secretary