

**Bamberg County School District**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Bamberg County School District Office**  
**March 4, 2024**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**Members present:** Board Chair Janeth Walker, Vice Chair John L. Hiers, Secretary Tonie A. Holman, Trustee Gwendolyn D. Bamberg, Trustee Beverly Bonaparte, Trustee Harriet Coker, Trustee Naomi Eckels, Trustee Cynthia “Cindy” F. Hurst, and Trustee Blossom Thompson (Via Google Meet)

**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 Cynthia Hurst moved and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded to approve the agenda as presented.** The motion passed 9-0.
4. **Approval of Minutes for February 5, 2024**  
**Trustee Beverly Bonaparte moved and Secretary Tonie Holman seconded to accept the February 5, 2024 meeting minutes as presented.** The motion passed 9-0.
5. **School Reports: Mandy Edwards, Denise Miller, Jordan Smith, Rhonda Ray, Patricia Moultrie-Goldsmith, and Deonia Simmons. Hand-outs: School Reports (Reviewed by Principals/Assistant Principals)**
  - Denmark-Olar Elementary School – Principal Rhonda Ray
  - Denmark-Olar Middle School – Principal Patricia Moultrie-Goldsmith
  - Denmark-Olar High School – Principal Deonia Simmons
  - Richard Carroll Elementary School – Interim 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]

Dr. Brown congratulated the Denmark-Olar Viking Varsity Girls Basketball team for winning the upper state championship and making it to the state championship. Dr. Brown applauded the athletes and their coaches for another great season.

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

Superintendent Brown noted the following:

- a) Dr. Brown applauded Dr. Brenda Hughes on being one of only ten teachers throughout SC for being selected to be a part of the Spring 2024 STAR Teacher Cohort, sponsored by Palmetto State Teachers Association and the Foundation for Professional Development.
- b) Dr. Brown continued with a summary of the enrollment data as of February 26, 2024 advising the total number of student enrollment across the district was 1,767.

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

- a. Bamberg-Ehrhardt Varsity Baseball Team – Hanahan Invitational Tournament – Charleston, SC – April 1, 2024-April 3, 2024 (Gene Schwarting, Coach)
- b. Bamberg-Ehrhardt Honors Jazz Ensemble – Carowinds “Performance in the Park” – Charlotte, NC – April 12, 2024 (Katherine Vaz, Band Instructor)
- c. Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School Physics/Physical Science Students – Carowinds “Education Day: Engineering Day” – Charlotte, NC – April 26, 2024 (Latasha Smart, Instructor)

Following a review of the request for an out of state/overnight trips, **Trustee Cynthia Hurst moved and Secretary Tonie Holman seconded to approve the request from Bamberg-Ehrhardt Varsity Baseball Team to participate in the Hanahan Invitational Tournament in Charleston, SC, April 1, 2024-April 3, 2024; Bamberg-Ehrhardt Honors Jazz Ensemble to attend “Performance in the Park” at Carowinds in Charlotte, NC, April 12, 2024; and Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School Physics/Physical Science Students to attend “Education Day: Engineering Day” at Carowinds in Charlotte, NC, April 26, 2024.** The motion passed 9-0. [Board Packet Enclosure]

9. **District ELA and Handwriting Textbook Selections (Action if Needed)**

Dr. Brown advised, pursuant to new guidelines from the SC Department of Education, the English Language Arts and Handwriting Textbook Selections must be reviewed and approved by the school board. Therefore, Dr. Brown introduced the following textbook selections chosen by the textbook committees:

- a) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, HMH Into Reading for grades K-5<sup>th</sup>;
- b) McGraw-Hill, LLC, StudySync for grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>;
- c) McGraw-Hill, LLC, StudySync (English) for grades 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>;
- d) Zaner-Bloser Handwriting © 2020 Grade K Student Edition; and
- e) Zaner-Bloser Handwriting © 2020 Grade 2 Student Edition.

After review of the textbook selections, **Trustee Cynthia Hurst moved and Trustee Harriet Coker seconded to approve Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, HMH Into Reading for grades K-5th; McGraw-Hill, LLC, StudySync for grades 6th-8th; McGraw-Hill, LLC, StudySync (English) for grades 1st-4th; Zaner-Bloser Handwriting © 2020 Grade K Student Edition; and Zaner-Bloser Handwriting © 2020 Grade 2 Student Edition as the textbook selections for the 2024-2025 school year.** The motion passed 9-0.

10. **Approval: 2024-2025 Draft Calendar**

Superintendent Brown reviewed the two different calendar options presented at last month's board meeting. [Board Packet Enclosures]

Dr. Brown presented the two calendar options as follows:

**Option A – Traditional Calendar - earlier start date. (Hybrid Calendar)**

This calendar option would provide an earlier start date, would give employees a fall and winter break, and the end of the first semester would conclude prior to Christmas break, which would help with exam and EOC test scores.

**Option B – 9-1 Calendar (Modified)**

This calendar option would allow forty-five days of instruction followed by one intercession week. The intercession week would allow for small group instruction, address student needs, and address teacher burnout. This calendar mirrors the 2023-2024 school calendar.

After a brief review, **Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Beverly Bonaparte seconded to approve and adopt the Traditional Calendar (Hybrid Calendar) – early start date as the official school calendar for the 2024-2025 school year.** The motion passed 9-0.

11. **General Obligation Bond Resolution (Action if Needed)**

Bob Dameron with Compass Municipal Advisors and Frannie Heizer of Burr & Forman, LLP reviewed the district's bond indebtedness and explained that the current debt service millage is 109 and will go to 98 this fall, which is the lowest it can go. They advised that bonds are competitively sold.

After a brief discussion, **Trustee Beverly Bonaparte moved and Secretary Tonie Holman seconded to approve issuance of the General Obligation Bond Resolution.** The motion passed 9-0.

12. **Presentation of School Board Redistricting Map**

Will Roberts, Director of Legislative Cartography and Dru Gregory, Assistant Director of Legislative Cartography with the South Carolina General Assembly announced that the school board district lines would follow the county council district lines. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Gregory presented maps of the districts and further advised the school board elections will mirror the county council seat elections. The board would still be a nine (9) member board with seven (7) district seats and two (2) at large seats.

13. **Monthly Financial Report**

Finance Director Devon Furr presented the Financial Report for Bamberg County School District for FY 2023-2024 as of February 2024, for review. [Board Packet Enclosures]

Ms. Furr reminded the board members that their Statements of Economic Interests are due this month.

**Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Cynthia Hurst seconded to accept the Financial Report for February 2024, as presented.** The motion passed 9-0.

14. **Board Member Update**

Trustee Beverly Bonaparte shared with the board that she was taking leadership classes through South Carolina State University, finished her first section, and would start her second session soon.

15. **Visitors' Comments**

None.

16. **Executive Session**

**Board Chair Janeth Walker called for a motion to enter Executive Session. Trustee Cynthia Hurst moved and Trustee Naomi Eckels seconded 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, Discussion of Release of Students, and Contractual Matters Regarding: Incidental to Potential Sale of Property.

Trustee Blossom Thompson ended her Google Meet attendance and exited the meeting.

**Open session: Trustee Naomi Eckels moved and Trustee 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.

17. **Action on Executive Session Items**

**Vice Chair John Hiers moved and Trustee Beverly Bonaparte seconded to approve Agenda Item 16 (a) (1) Personnel Recommendations for Hire for employees a, b, and c, Agenda Item 16 (a) (2) Personnel Recommendations for Resignation for employees b, c, d, and e, and Agenda Item 16 (b) Discussion of Release of Students for students a, b, and c.** The motion passed 8-0.

There was no action taken on Agenda Item 16 (c) Contractual Matters Regarding: (1) Incidental to Potential Sale of Property as there were no recommendations at this time.

18. **Adjourn**

**Trustee Harriet Coker moved and Secretary Tonie Holman seconded to adjourn the meeting.** The motion passed 8-0.

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Minutes approved:

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Janeth Walker, Board Chair

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Tonie A. Holman, Secretary