

**Williamsburg County School Board of Trustees**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, July 28, 2025 – 6:00 PM**  
**Public Service Administration Building – Council Chambers – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**  
**201 W. Main Street – Kingstree, South Carolina 29556**

**Members Present:** Dr. Marva B. Cannon, Dr. Jerry L. Dicks, Rev. Alfred Darby, Ms. Tawan Alston, Mr. Mack Burgess, Dr. Kenneth Burgess, Mr. Gary McKenzie, Dr. Janice Gamble, and Mrs. Carletta Scott Isreal

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** Dr. Angela Jacobs, Genia Smith, Brent Streett, Eunice Alston, Ernestine Young, Vernie Williams, Berlinda Mack, Myron Davis, Latonya West, Lerlisa McCollough, Sherri McLaughlin, Kayla McLaughlin, Kenadee Nesmith, Kayla Fulton, Ashton Rush, Sherry Fulton, Javonne Omar Montgomery, and Delphia Barr

**Meeting Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Marva B. Cannon, board chair, at 6:00 pm. The secretary confirmed the Establishment of Quorum and the chair confirmed the Notification of Media.

**Welcome**

The board chair welcomed all present to the meeting. She also expressed the excitement of a new school year.

**Moment of Silence**

Dr. Dicks asked all persons to observe a Moment of Silence.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All persons were asked to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

A motion was made by T. Alston to approve the consent agenda for the July 28, 2025 board meeting, motion was seconded by Rev. A. Darby. Motion carried.

**Action Items**

A motion was made by A. Darby to approve the Williamsburg County School Board of Trustees Minutes from Monday, June 16, 2025 and June 23, 2025, seconded by Dr. J. Dicks. Motion carried.

**Thought for Today**

Rev. A. Darby shared the Thought for Today.

**Public Participation**

Ms. Sherry Fulton, President of the Blakely/Williamsburg Blakely Alumni Association, appeared before the Board of Trustees regarding D.P. Cooper school, the name change, the access and usage of the building. There were several questions regarding the school, and Ms. Fulton asked the Board to clarify what was the alumni association's role is or isn't as it relates to DP Cooper school. Ms. Fulton thanked the Board and invited them to the Alumni Fest in September 26, 2025. Board Chair Dr. M. Cannon, informed Ms. Fulton, that she would receive a written response within 10 business days.

**Legislative Update**

Per M. Burgess, SC legislation on teacher pay hike, state income tax cut take effect July 1, what to know. Changes to the teacher certification process. The Educator Assistance Act makes a South Carolina Board of Education's retired educator certificate a lifelong license starting on July 1. This allows a retired South Carolina educator to maintain their certification if they were to pursue reemployment with a school district later on. Pay bump for teachers, school resource officer funding State lawmakers approved a teacher pay bump through a budget proviso that brought an educator's minimum starting salary from \$47,000 to \$48,800. The spending plan also included approximately \$29 million in funding for a school safety plan that ensures every public school in the state has a school resource officer. This would cover the hiring costs of 177 new resource officers to fill gaps in the state's public schools, as well as the necessary training and equipment costs. There was a question asked by Rev. Darby regarding retired teachers for clarity. Question was clarified by Mr. M. Burgess.

### **Curriculum & Instruction Update**

Mrs. Genia Smith, Assistant Superintendent, presented the Curriculum & Instruction Update. Ms. Smith informed the board that they were provided a PowerPoint regarding an overview of the curriculum that will be used this upcoming school year and that she will be highlighting the hard work that has taken place in the Office of Teaching and Learning this summer.

She stated that we had our annual Curriculum Carnival and the theme was Exploring, Discover and Thrive. We then focused on the leadership camp. The theme of our camp was Stronger Together, United in resilience. There were to phenomenal speakers, Dr. Holly and Dr. Johnson. The Special Education Department hosted a special service summer institute. Finally, there was a summer professional development to wrap up our preparation for our scholars who will be returning on August 1, 2025. She stated that we are confident and excited to welcome our scholars back to Williamsburg County School District for the 2025-2026 school year. Rev. A. Darby asked if we are having a mock trial this year? Mrs. Smith said yes sir, it is our plan to make sure that we're able to start the Mock trial this year. He also asked about the Science Labs. Questions were also asked by Chair Cannon. She asked if this was a new Curriculum. Mrs. Smith stated that only the Math was a new curriculum. Ms. T. Alston also asked if there were any social emotional learning in the curriculum? Mrs. Smith stated that within the curriculum, she was not able to answer that question, but there is an MTS framework which focuses on academics and behavior that is being sponsored through the special services department.

### **Federal Programs Update**

Dr. Ernestine Young, Deputy Superintendent of the Office of Federal Programs presented the Federal Programs Update. She stated that 200,000.00 was cut from the district's federal program budget. The State Department is uncertain when the funds will arrive and the last day to submit our plans is August 21, 2025. She also stated that Palmetto Priority funds no longer exists. Dr. Young also stated that the new budget should be in place by August 15, 2025, In the preparation plans, we are looking at getting an interpreter, etc., the fall public meeting will be held August 11 – 29, 2025, information will be sent to the news, so it will be advertised. She stated that in the Office of Federal Programs, we hope for the best, but we prepared the worst as the funds has been cut drastically. Our focus area for this year is school attendance, professional development workshop and mileage costs, and after school summer school program costs to avoid excessive spending. Dr. Young also provided answers to questions asked by Dr. Dicks and Dr. K. Burgess regarding the allocation of Federal funds. Rev. Darby asked if there were any effects on employment because of the budget cuts. Dr. Young stated that we will be able to sustain this year, but it may take a toll for next school year. There were also questions, asked from C. Isreal, T. Alston and G. McKenzie regarding the absences of students. Dr. Young stated that there will have to be a conversation with the principals to come up with a solution regarding the excessive absences.

### **Human Resources Update**

Ms. Latonya West presented the personnel update to the board, of which a copy was provided to them in their board packet. She also stated that the Office of Human Resources had their new employee orientation

on July 22, 2025 of which approximately 40 new employees attended. There were several questions asked from the board members. Ms. West informed the board that she will get clarification to the answers to their questions.

### **Policy Update**

Dr. Dicks presented the following policy updates for the 1<sup>st</sup> reading. They are:

- DBJ – Budget Transfers
- GCF – Professional Staff Hiring
- GCF-R – Administrative Rule
- GCFB – Hiring of Administrative Staff
- GCK – Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers
- GCK-R – Administrative Rule

Dr. J. Dicks made a motion to suspend the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading on policies GCFB and GCK-R, only to update the policies. Dr. K. Burgess seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Dr. J. Gamble asked if Policy GCFR, because it was changed to reflect District Human Resources Director, will that change be added to the Human Resource Director's job description? We need to make sure that this is added to the job description of the HR director.

Dr. Jacobs gave remarks regarding starting the new year and that we are excited to start the new year.

Dr. Cannon reminded the board to stay for a minute after being adjourned to take a picture for the SCSBA welcome back to school.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. J. Gamble made a motion to adjourn the July 28, 2025 board meeting, seconded by M. Burgess. The motion was carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Board Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Carletta Scott Isreal, Board Secretary

Board Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Marva B. Cannon, Board Chair