

Beaufort County Board of Education Work Session

October 29, 2011

Chairman Washington called the two-day work session back to order at 9:19 a.m.

Continuation of Student Services annual report

Superintendent Truesdale updated the Board on the district's efforts to address bullying among student. Although those efforts have been under way for several years, each of the district's schools held a one-hour anti-bullying program from 9-10 a.m. Wednesday, October 26. The key elements at all grade levels involved re-teaching Respect and Responsibility. Reports from principals and guidance counselors indicated that students were engaged in the discussions. Ongoing efforts will enlist assistance from parents, mentoring groups, service organizations and faith leaders. Board members stressed that adults should model good behavior for children and that parents should remain engaged in monitoring and addressing children's behavior. Sean Alford pointed out that the district's disciplinary code contains specific references to bullying and specific guidelines for disciplinary actions for violators.

Proof of Residency forms

Mr. Alford reported on 894 students who have not yet provided proof of residency to the schools where they are enrolled. He said that November 7 is the deadline for those students to submit completed forms. Social workers will be sent next week to the homes of students whose parents have not verified their residency status. On November 7, Mr. Alford said that students with unsubstantiated residences in the county will be sent home. Several board members said that while they understand the need to require proof of residency, they regret that students may pay the price for their parents' lack of attention to the requirement.

Energy policies

Phyllis White briefed the board on the district's energy-saving and water-saving initiatives over the past two years. Included are new HVAC controls and operating systems, low-energy light fixtures, and automated power turn-off systems for times when buildings are not occupied. Data indicate that fewer kilowatt-hours of power were used in the district last year than in 2005 despite the addition of more than a million additional square feet of building space.

Development of 2012 board calendar

The Board discussed general topics related to the development of a draft 2010 calendar for Board meetings. One such topic was the possibility of opening up time for more interaction between the Board and K-12 stakeholders across the county.

Financial literacy

Mr. Alford updated the board about the district's financial literacy efforts, which are designed to teach students various aspects of personal finance and basic economics. The program is made possible through the EverFi e-learning platform and includes a six-hour online literacy course sponsored by BB&T. Governor Haley has endorsed the use of the EverFI model statewide.

Legislative issues

Mr. Washington noted an upcoming meeting of the local legislative delegation and asked Board members if there were any issues that should be taken to legislators. Mr. Campbell mentioned the discussion from Day 1 of the Board's work session having to do with state procurement policies that make doing business more difficult for small local, minority- and women-owned businesses. Several Board members indicated that they would attend the upcoming state Dec. 2-4 legislative conference sponsored by the South Carolina School Boards Association, to be held at Hilton Head.

AM2 Board-Superintendent relationships

Mr. Wilson moved (seconded by Mr. Campbell) that the Board approve a set of policies. One section stated that the Board would "direct the superintendent only through official decisions of the full Board," with those decisions made by formal and recorded votes." Another section states that Board requests for "substantive information" should be made to the superintendent and not to individual members of the staff. Another section states that "authority over, and accountability of, staff are the responsibility of the superintendent." The Board approved the policies unanimously.

Mr. Wilson also moved (seconded by Mr. Speaks) that the Board not fund a study on reconfiguring Battery Creek High School. The board approved unanimously.

Executive session

Ms. Bush moved (seconded by Mr. Speaks) that the Board go into executive session for the purposes of conducting the superintendent's evaluation.

Following the executive session, the Board adjourned at 4:25 p.m.