

Superintendent's Board of Education meeting summary

Two-day work session, October 27-28, 2017

Day 1 – October 27, 2017

Chair Earl Campbell convened the first day of the Board's two-day work session at 8:32 a.m.

The agenda was approved.

Pledge of allegiance and invocation.

Public Comment: A community member criticized the statements of Board members.

Superintendent Moss briefed Board members on the new statewide accountability system for all K-12 public schools developed by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee. Board members asked questions and commented on various aspects of the new system.

Chief Administrative and Human Resources Officer Alice Walton and Director of Personnel Reggie Deas briefed Board members on South Carolina's processes for accrediting school administrators and classroom teachers. Ms. Walton and Mr. Deas answered Board members' questions.

Dr. Moss updated Board members on recommendations from a recent efficiency study on the district conducted by a private contractor. Similar studies were conducted for all South Carolina school districts as directed by the General Assembly. Among the recommendations discussed by Dr. Moss were:

- Changing the school district's employee pay periods from 26 per year (every two weeks) to 24 per year (twice per month) – Board members generally did not seem to favor the change because it would not result in any financial savings for the district.
- Continue to cross-train personnel – Dr. Moss said that the district would continue.
- Use online resources to deliver information to employees and answer their questions – Dr. Moss said that while he agreed that providing online information to employees is helpful, he would not support saving money by eliminating Human Resources staff who are available to provide direct and personal customer service and responses to employees.
- Improve incentive programs to address shortages of classroom teachers and improve teacher recruitment – Dr. Moss recommended continuing to enhance the district's locality pay supplement (and possibly spreading each employee's annual supplement through all of their paychecks as opposed to twice yearly). He also expressed the district's commitment to improving teacher recruitment efforts.
- Leverage state contracts and "group purchasing" by multiple school districts to save money – Dr. Moss said the district already utilizes state contracts and group purchasing

to see if lower prices might be available, and also contacts other districts to include them in Beaufort County's purchasing agreements.

- Investigate opportunities to reduce the numbers of bus stops per route – Dr. Moss said the district had used computerized routing software and feedback from drivers to reduce the number of buses used in daily operations. The Office of Transportation was restructured to place supervisors in locations around the county rather than have all of them located at the district office in Beaufort.
- Create dual employment opportunities as a way to retain school bus drivers – Dr. Moss said the district would investigate possible opportunities.

Chief Instructional Services Officer Dereck Rhoads and Director of Accountability Daniel Fallon briefed Board members about how the district gathers and reports data from student assessments.

Motion to go into executive session to discuss the discipline of an employee; discussion of negotiations incident to proposed purchase of properties in the Beaufort High and Hilton Head Island high school clusters; discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements regarding impact fee studies; and receipt of legal advice regarding pending claims and other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege. Motion approved.

There was no action coming out of executive session.

Dr. Moss briefed Board members on discussions by the Jasper County Board of Education about purchasing the ACE facility, and also about expanding CATE opportunities to students beyond the two facilities currently housed at Battery Creek and May River high schools. Dr. Moss and Board members noted that current CATE programs are popular among students and are at or near full capacity.

Board members engaged in an extended discussion about how to better incorporate its stated goals into its meeting agendas.

Day 1 of the two-day work session was recessed at 2:45 p.m.

Day 2 – October 28, 2017

Mr. Campbell reconvened the Board's two-day work session at 8:49 a.m.

Ms. Walton outlined the district's hiring process for school bus drivers, including the screening of applications. Chief Auxiliary Services Officer Gregory McCord gave a presentation on the district's bus driver salaries. Ms. Walton and Dr. McCord addressed specific salary concerns expressed by current bus drivers. About a dozen drivers were in attendance, and several offered informal feedback. Board members asked Ms. Walton and Dr. McCord to meet with all bus drivers as a group and address their salary concerns.

Dr. Moss briefed Board members on feedback from parents and community members at recent town hall meetings to discuss possible strategies to address growth in student enrollment, particularly in the Bluffton area. Dr. Moss said that the vast majority of town hall participants did not favor rezoning, particularly transporting students long distances to school or rezoning Bluffton students to schools north of the Broad River. He said town hall participants generally preferred mobile classrooms over rezoning, and participants favored a renewed push for a bond referendum to pay for building additional classroom space. Participants also generally wanted students to remain enrolled at their current schools while the district handled its enrollment growth issues.

Facilities, Planning and Construction Officer Robert Oetting gave a presentation on population projections for Beaufort County (projections by county government), which now call for even more rapid growth than previously anticipated. He presented a “decision tree” that laid out possible courses of action for the Board in dealing with enrollment growth.

Mr. Oetting previewed what a potential \$128 million five-year bond referendum might look like for specific schools, including HVAC and school roof replacements; Career and Technology Education facilities at high schools that don’t currently have them; expansions to May River High and River Ridge Academy; and a new PreK-Grade 8 school in Bluffton.

Dr. Moss recommended that the Board approve: holding a bond referendum for school construction in Bluffton and HVAC and roof replacements; changing Hilton Head Island School for the Creative Arts to a Grade 1-8 configuration to relieve overcrowding at Hilton Head Island Middle School; moving Pritchardville Elementary fifth-graders to H.E. McCracken Middle; and approving no additional school choice applications for River Ridge Academy. Board members discussed the possible impact of limiting or eliminating school choice, including employee courtesy school choice.

Board members directed Dr. Moss to bring back to the Board no-cost and low-cost proposals for dealing with Bluffton’s enrollment growth, as well as a proposal to accommodate growth if a school construction bond referendum were to be approved by the Board but ultimately not be successful.

Motion by Joseph Dunkle to hire an independent consultant to analyze the district’s enrollment growth and current building capacity in order to help determine the best course of action. After a brief discussion, Mr. Dunkle agreed to postpone his motion until the November 7 Board meeting. Board members then continued their discussion about possible options to handle enrollment growth in Bluffton.

Mr. Oetting updated Board members on construction projects around the district last summer, including renovations at Bluffton Elementary, Lady’s Island Middle, Mossy Oaks Elementary, Battery Creek High, Bluffton High, Port Royal Elementary and Hilton Head Island High. A new warehouse and a solar panel farm are under construction near the district office. Architectural designs are complete for the new competition gymnasium and performing arts center at Whale

Branch Early College High School. Mr. Oetting said that he hoped Whale Branch construction would begin in November 2017. He also briefed Board members on construction budgets and costs for River Ridge Academy and May River High.

Board Secretary Robyn Cushingberry reviewed a draft calendar for the Board's 2017-18 meeting schedule. After a discussion and suggestions from Board members, Ms. Cushingberry said she would incorporate those suggestions into a revised draft that she would bring back to the Board for approval.

General Counsel Drew Davis updated Board members on the McNair law firm's submitted proposal to continue representing the school district's interests at the South Carolina General Assembly.

Mr. Davis presented for the Board's consideration a draft 2018 legislative agenda that included the following: Increase and fully fund beginning teachers' salaries at \$40,000; fully fund all state and federal government mandates; increase funding for maintenance and replacement of school buses; return control of academic calendars to local school districts, particularly their ability to begin their academic years earlier than what is currently allowed (no earlier than the third Monday in August); revise state law to allow local school districts to establish more than one school of choice; revised the Teacher and Employment and Dismissal Act to streamline the hearing process and reduce costs to school districts and employees; revise state law regarding what comprises "two-thirds" of school boards' voting members; and revise state law to allow districts to hire noncertified teachers up to 25 percent of a school's total teaching staff (as charter schools are currently allowed to do).

Motion to approve on the first of three readings Board Policy revisions stemming from structural changes to Board committees. After a discussion, motion approved.

Motion to approve on the first of three readings Board Policy 2.1 (Board Rule and Job Description). After a discussion, motion approved.

Motion to approve on the first of three readings Board Policy 3.11 (Board Legislative Program). After a discussion, motion approved.

Motion to approve on the first of three readings Board Policy 3.5 (Process for Addressing Violations of Policy). After a discussion, motion approved.

Board members discussed whether there should be any consideration given to changing Beaufort County from having Board members represent the county at large rather than specific districts in the county. No action was proposed.

Discussion about how to improve dialogue between the Board and School Improvement Councils.

Discussion about the appropriateness of conducting Board business by e-mails among Board members.

Ms. Cushingberry presented, and the Board discussed, a draft template for revisions to Board meeting agendas that would align agenda items to the Board's goals. Board members discussed possible revisions.

Board members recapped items of interest from the two-day work session and clarified their expectations for staff regarding November presentations on possible options to deal with enrollment growth.

Public Comment

A community member commented on the Board's efforts to deal with enrollment growth.

Motion approved to adjourn the two-day work session. The work session was adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

District staff seeking more detailed information about Board actions can view Board meetings in their entirety, at any time, on the County Channel. Archived meetings may be viewed at this link: <http://www.bcqov.net/departments/community-services/county-channel/index.php>