

Superintendent's Board of Education meeting summary

Two-day work session, November 14-15, 2014

Day 1, November 14, 2014

Chairman Evans convened the first day of the Board's two-day work session at 9:05 a.m.

The agenda was approved.

Pledge of allegiance and invocation.

No public comments.

Chief Instructional Services Officer Dereck Rhoads and Director of Academic Initiatives N'Kia Campbell updated the Board on the district's efforts to develop more instructional choices for students and parents. Ms. Campbell outlined the district's 13 current instructional choices, including St. Helena Elementary's decision to change its choice option from arts-infused to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). She then briefed Board members on upcoming communications efforts with parents, including a pair of regional "School Choice Fairs" to introduce the various instructional options to parents. Superintendent Moss said that a broader menu of school choices will keep parents more engaged in supporting classroom learning. Board members discussed various aspects of school choice programs.

Dr. Moss discussed how the development of new school choice options will affect school capacity issues across the district.

Military Liaison Kimberly Wiley briefed Board members on the challenges faced by the families of U.S. Marines stationed in Beaufort County. She urged Board members to extend school choice and out-of-zone transfer application deadlines for children in military families who often don't get transfer orders to the county until after those deadlines have expired. Board members and Dr. Moss discussed the logistics and challenges associated with extending application deadlines.

Dr. Rhoads introduced Early Childhood Education Coordinator Ashley Hutchison and Leroy Gilliard and Dewayne Frederick from Head Start, which provides services to families that are below the federal poverty level. Mr. Frederick gave an overview of Head Start's services in Beaufort County, and Dr. Moss noted that state officials will soon be using Beaufort County as an example of successful strategies in early childhood education. Ms. Hutchison briefed the Board on the district's expansion of early childhood services.

Chairman Evans introduced a preliminary discussion on proposals for the 2015-16 school district calendar, including one option that would complete the fall semester before the holiday break in December and end the spring semester in late May. That “shortened” calendar would be accomplished by reducing the numbers of holidays during the academic year. The Board will discuss that and other calendar options at its next two-day work session January 9-10.

Chief Administrative Services and Human Resources Officer Alice Walton introduced Dale Crawford, who briefed Board members on teacher salary and cost-of-living data comparisons with similar South Carolina districts. Board members discussed the data and the challenges that they pose to the district’s teacher recruitment efforts. Ms. Walton outlined the district’s hiring process and current trends in teacher vacancies, resignations, retirements and transfer requests. Dr. Moss remarked that consistently high teacher turnover has a negative and disruptive impact on student learning. Teacher Recruitment Coordinator Becky Randazzo briefed Board members on the district’s teacher recruitment efforts, which has recently expanded into the Northeast, Central and Southwestern United States. Ms. Walton said that 225 teachers are currently eligible to retire.

District General Counsel Drew Davis introduced a discussion about revising state laws governing district-level personnel hearings. Chairman Evans sent that issue (along with the petition process required to campaign for a Board of Education seat) to the Legislative Advocacy and Community Outreach Committee for a recommendation back to the full Board in December.

Chairman Evans adjourned the first day’s work session at 4:10 p.m.

Day 2, November 15, 2014

Chairman Evans convened the second day of the Board’s two-day work session at 9:20 a.m., and the Board went into executive session.

Coming out of executive session at 11:11 a.m., Chairman Evans summarized the Board’s evaluation of Superintendent Jeff Moss. The motion was made to extend Dr. Moss’ contract through June 30, 2020. Motion approved. Dr. Moss said that he appreciated the Board’s vote of confidence and expressed his hope that he and the Board would be able to successfully accomplish their shared goals for student achievement in the district.

Chief Instructional Services Officer Dereck Rhoads briefed Board members on the development and planned implementation of new South Carolina-specific mathematics and English Language Arts academic standards ordered by the General Assembly to replace the Common Core standards previously approved by the State Board of Education. Chairman Evans moderated a discussion about the new standards.

Chief Operations Officer Phyllis White, Planning Coordinator Carol Crutchfield and Facilities Coordinator Robert Oetting briefed Board members on 10-year enrollment projections, future facilities needs and upcoming renovations and updates across the district.

Chairman Evans said that a follow-up meeting between the Beaufort County and Jasper County boards of education has been scheduled for December 15 to discuss putting a transitional group together to coordinate changes in governance at the Beaufort-Jasper Academy of Career Excellence (ACE).

Chief Student Services Officer Gregory McCord presented the district's annual Student Services Report and answered questions from Board members. Communications Director Jim Foster presented the annual communications report and answered questions from Board members.

Chairman Evans adjourned the work session at 3:50.