

Board of Education Summary – Board Work Session – Friday, January 6, 2012

Mr. Washington called the Work Session to order at 9:15 AM

Approval of Agenda

Agenda was unanimously approved

Pledge of Allegiance

Statement of Media Notification

Invocation

Mr. Burnes provided the invocation

Update on *High Expectations for All*

Dr. Truesdale presented on the results of many initiatives over the past several years that have demonstrated the Board of Education's commitment to high expectations.

- *Maximizing Time for Learning: Extending Learning Time:* The percentage of students not meeting state standards on PASS and thereby qualifying for ELT based on PASS scores 2009-2011 has been reduced from 40% to 33.5%.
- *Maximizing Time for Learning: Accelerated Learning Schools:* Schools with high concentrations of students not yet meeting state standards were designated as Accelerated Learning Schools several years ago. A goal was originally set for four schools (Whale Branch Elementary and Middle, Davis and St. Helena Elementary Schools) to accelerate learning so that students "catch up" with their peers. In Accelerated Learning Schools, the district tracks the percentage of students making 1.5 years growth on Measures of Academic Performance (MAP). In 2010, 41%-54% of students saw 1.5 years growth. In 2011, 46%-68% of students in these schools saw 1.5 years growth in one year in Reading and Math. Report Card Ratings improved from At-Risk to Below Average at WBES and Below Average to Average at WBMS. There are now no At-Risk schools in the district, and SHES and WBES are the only schools rated Below Average.
- *Maximizing Time for Learning: Elimination of Early Dismissal/Late Arrivals:* Since the Board of Education supported the proposal to eliminate late arrivals and early dismissals in high schools, data indicate higher number of credits being completed by students and more engaged learners.
- *Maximizing Time for Learning: Virtual Summer School for Grades K-7:* The goal of Virtual Summer School is to mitigate loss of academic skills over summer vacation, something particularly noticeable in children from poverty backgrounds. In Beaufort County, over 4,000 students participated in virtual summer school in 2010 and 2011. In Summer 2010, virtual summer school students outperformed their peers in 6 of 18 areas. In 2011, virtual summer school participants outperformed peers in 13 of 18 areas. In Grades K-7, 4,000 students voluntarily participated in Virtual Summer School. During the summer of 2011, nearly 1,700 matched students and VSS students equaled or outperformed non-VSS students in 13 of 18 areas.

- *Extended Studies Diplomas:* Beaufort County has had extended studies diplomas available for high school students for many years. However, participation has historically been low. The Board of Education supported a proposal to enhance criteria for extended studies diplomas in spring 2011, and a Distinguished Diploma was created. The STEM diploma is also available. As of January 2, 2012, 90 students are on track to earn extended studies diplomas in the five high schools. There have been no extended studies diplomas awarded in the past four years even though the opportunity has existed for many years. In summer 2011, district leaders sent individual letters to students encouraging them to review their course offerings to seek Distinguished or STEM diplomas. Principals and guidance counselors were commended for doing an excellent job in encouraging students to stretch toward extended studies diplomas.
- *Academic Rigor:* In 2010- 2011, a proposal was developed to increase academic rigor for athletes. The Board of Education endorsed a requirement for students to maintain a 2.0 GPA to participate in competitive athletics. Beaufort County School District is one of only two districts in South Carolina to take such a stand on academic rigor for athletes. Implementation is scheduled for August 2012.
- *Update on Minority Achievement:* Two years ago, the Board of Education commissioned an external evaluation of performance of minority students. When presented a year ago, the external evaluation revealed that although overall academic performance had improved, African-American male students' achievement had not kept pace at the same rate. The Board of Education charged district leaders with improving the academic performance of minority students. Since that evaluation, data indicates that the percentage growth in student achievement grades 3-8 on PASS from 2009-2011 has grown for all minority groups. Likewise, the percentage growth in HSAP passage rate (passing both ELA and Math) in high schools has grown in all minority areas.

Dr. Truesdale stated that while we are not yet where we need to be, the District is clearly setting high expectations for learners as required by the Board of Education. The goal is to ensure that each student is ready for college and careers, helping those improve who need assistance and stretching all toward higher levels of improvement. Steady incremental progress is evident.

Dr. Truesdale provided the Board with a sample of District and school awards and recognitions.

Update on Davis/Whale Branch Consolidation

Dr. Truesdale shared that after meetings with Head Start, the Sheldon Township Community Council and principals, the district recommends that Davis Early Learning Center serve BCSD pre-kindergarten four year olds and Head Start serve children ages 0-3. Kindergarten will move to Whale Branch Elementary School as previously approved. Whale Branch Elementary School will become a K-4 school in 2012-13 and Whale Branch Middle School continues to serve 5-8. The Board unanimously approved the recommendation.

Presentation of Performance Expectations

Dr. Alford presented compliance reports on Performance Expectations in the following areas:

- Foster Technology Use – Virtual Summer School, Virtual Learning Program, Virtual Keyboarding
- Evaluate Instruction Programs – Data Entry Processes and AVID will be reviewed spring 2012
- Continuous Improvement – Extensive data from 2009-2010 were presented for the Board to review.
- Involve Staff/Parents in Curriculum – Dr. Alford reviewed the various meetings with staff and parents that are conducted to involve them in curricula decisions.
- Evaluate Textbooks – Procedures for the selection and evaluation of textbooks and other learning materials were presented.
- Professional Development – An extensive list of professional development activities for the previous year were presented.

Ratification of 2012-2013 Calendar

After extensive discussion and changes by staff, the school calendar for 2012-13 was approved.

Board of Education Meeting Calendar

The Board set dates for School Improvement Council/Community Stakeholder meetings. It was suggested that August 21 be scheduled during the second part of the Board Business Session at Council Chambers. The Board also moved the dates of the Budget Public Forum Dates from April 25 and 26 to April 10 at Battery Creek High School and April 11 at Bluffton High School. The calendar was agreed upon with the date for an education forum to be set, to share *State of the Schools*.

Preliminary Budget Considerations for School Year 2012-13 Overview, Update and Feedback from Public Conversations

Programmatic Choice Programs/Enrollment and Percent Capacity Usage

Dr. Truesdale reviewed background information on Programmatic Choice Programs. When the long-range facilities plan was commissioned by the Board of Education in 2006, the planning consultant noted that the District had many choices and transfer options as well as different calendars and extensive out of zone transfers. He recommended that the district limit out-of-zone transfers that were causing imbalance in enrollments. The Board directed district leaders to consolidate into one calendar and limit transfers. In March 2011, the Board considered issues of student assignments and suspended programmatic transfers for the 2011-2012 school year to stabilize enrollments. For the 2012-2015 school years, the following options were proposed:

General transfers – No changes were recommended in General Transfer protocol. General Transfers include employee courtesy, majority to minority transfer, health hardships and senior status (5th, 8th and 12th graders).

Magnet programs – Magnet programs were recommended to continue at AMES and Montessori at BES, AMES at PVES, and TCL programs at WBECHS. District leaders were asked to develop criteria for admission to magnet programs that are specific, with stipulations that continuation in the program is contingent upon a student's meeting academic and behavioral expectations, and that a parent component is included.

Programmatic Transfers – Seven schools 50%-74% were approved for 2012-15 for programmatic transfers to “strongly recruit” students to attend to balance enrollments. All schools will have designated numbers of student seats offered:

- Lady's Island Elementary – Arts Infusion
- St. Helena Elementary – World Language and STEM
- Shanklin Elementary – Environmental Science
- Lady's Island Middle – STEM (to include AMES Extension)
- Robert Smalls – STEM
- Whale Branch Middle – STEM
- Battery Creek High: Tri-Academy; IT/Engineering, Military Science/Aviation, Arts & Humanities

The goal is to keep all schools between 75%-89% full to allow room for growth and General Transfers. Out-of-zone transfers will be carefully monitored to ensure that enrollment imbalances do not occur. Demographic data will be monitored to ensure that Programmatic Transfers do not adversely affect racial balance of a school.

To further discussion, Carol Crutchfield from Planning presented enrollment and percent of capacity usage. Concerns were raised regarding long-term planning in economic unstable times as numbers could change in regard to enrollment in the future. Boundaries cannot be perceived as finite as growth in various areas could change.

The Board discussed the various proposed programmatic and school choice considerations and their desire that perhaps in the future, additional programs could be opened for transfers.

The Board moved to adopt the recommendations on Programmatic Choice. The Board approved.

Mr. Washington requested that the Board identify programs needing additional funding and prioritize as the Board moves toward the budget process. He also requested that, for tomorrow's session, the board prioritize compensation (Administrative – certified/classified; Classifieds; Board Certified; Pay for Performance, etc).

Financial Update – Chief Financial Officer Phyllis White presented a financial update to the Board focusing on upcoming budget discussions. In this continued recession in which County tax collections have fallen significantly below anticipated, recommendations were made to:

- Follow fund balance policy to be able to demonstrate continued sound fiscal practice to credit agencies by maintaining a fund balance between 13%-15%. This will limit an increase in expenditures of \$1 million to \$1.5 million in the FY 2013 budget. The goal should be a “no-increase” budget.
- Adhere to contractual obligations as necessary.
- Identify cost savings whenever possible during current year (FY 2012). Continue to seek outside grants to fund programs.
- Resolve New River TIF issues with the County to correct past negative impacts on tax collections and pursue corrections to future tax rates during the reassessment period.

The Board discussed the recommendations.

Proposed Port Royal TIF – The Board discussed the proposed Port Royal Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement. The Board made no decision. Additional information needed includes financial impact analysis and specific language that would protect the financial interests of the school district.

The Board went into Executive Session at 3:15 p.m. to discuss contractual matters, legal issues, board relations, personnel, and student matters.

Saturday, January 7, 2012

Chairman Washington called the two-day work session back to order at 11:32 a.m.

ACE Board appointment

Mr. Washington announced the appointment of Julie Bell to the ACE Board, effectively immediately. Ms. Bell takes the place of Wayne Carbiener, and Mr. Washington said that Mr. Carbiener had requested that he be replaced by another member as the Board’s representative to ACE.

Student appeal process

Mr. Washington directed that this agenda item be postponed so the district administration could update and/or revise the student appeal process.

Ad Hoc Committees

Mr. Washington reviewed his previously stated interest in investigating several topics as possible areas of Board planning and policy-making. He said that he is not advocating Board micromanagement of district operations or expanding bureaucracy, but rather making better use of existing resources and setting expectations at the policy level about what the Board desires at the district administration and school levels. He reviewed his three proposed ad hoc committees:

Entrepreneur vs. Entitlement (Ad Hoc Committee for Entrepreneurship)

Mr. Washington restated his conviction that district schools need a more focused effort to teach students about the importance of entrepreneurship to the nation and the

community. One area where this is already being done, Superintendent Truesdale pointed out, is the district's financial literacy initiative, which benefits from a strong corps of retiree-volunteers.

Energy Policy (Ad Hoc Committee on Energy)

Mr. Washington said that he wants answers to some basic questions. "Do we have a district policy on energy-efficient vehicles? Do we have a policy that encourages us to look at alternative energy sources, coupled with ways to tie that in with students' academic studies? Our students need to understand that there are practical aspects to the academic lessons that they're learning in school."

Mr. Campbell asked if the district had looked at alternative fuel sources for district service vehicles, including natural gas, in pursuit of lower energy costs. Phyllis White said that the district had not investigated natural gas as a possible fuel source but would do so. Facilities Director Robert Oetting told Board members that the initial set-up for natural gas fueling of district vehicles would be expensive, but long-term savings might be possible.

Minority, Women and Local Bids (Ad Hoc Committee)

Mr. Washington expressed an interest in making certain that local businesses have every possible opportunity to bid on district contracts, the goal being to keep as much business within the local community as possible. He added that contractors need to understand the district's procurement process and the laws and regulations that govern it. Phyllis White said that district staff has met with local contractors in the past, and Robert Oetting said that a briefing for local minority contractors is scheduled for March to give them information about upcoming district projects and opportunities to win those contracts. One productive strategy, Ms. White suggested, would be for local companies to earn contracts for smaller projects that would help them get experience with the district in order to strengthen their bids for larger projects. Ms. Bush said that while the Board is governed by procurement regulations, the district should do whatever it can within the law to assist local businesses.

Vice-Chairman Wilson moved that the Board's 2012 legislative priority list be added to the day's agenda. Motion approved unanimously. The list includes topics such as funding flexibility, charter school funding, federal funds for education, property tax relief, early childhood education and sales tax relief. Mr. Wilson said that most of the items on the priority list are linked to the legislative priorities of the South Carolina School Boards Association. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the list.

Mr. Washington urged Board members to review the State Superintendent of Education's draft request for South Carolina's waiver from certain provisions of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, and to forward their individual comments to the South Carolina Department of Education. Mr. Wilson said that the only reason South Carolina's waiver request is necessary is because Congress cannot reach an agreement on modifying NCLB. He applauded State Superintendent Zais for attempting to achieve South Carolina-specific exemptions from the federal law.

Mr. Washington recapped the Board's discussion of FY2013 budget considerations from Day One of the two-day work session.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.