



## Florence County School District Three

### Board of Trustees

### *Board Minutes*

District Office Board Room

**Thursday, November 20, 2014**

**6:30 PM**

**In Attendance:** Julia Mims, Barbara Bryant, Paula Morris, Terrie Bryant, Debra McKnight, and John Graham

**Absent:** Lane Floyd, Michael Blakeley, and Toby Ackerman

**Call to Order:** Board Chair, Dr. Julia Mims, called the November 20, 2014 regular monthly meeting of the Florence County School District Three Board of Trustees to order. In accordance with the S. C. Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-809d), as amended, the following have been notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting: Lake City News & Post and Lake City News and Shopper. This agenda is also posted on the Florence County School District Three website. A moment of silence was observed after which Chair Mims led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**School Spotlight:** Susan Cox and the JPTIS Band performed for the first time before an audience to open up tonight's November 20, 2014 board meeting. The Choir for JPTIS, under the direction of Nancy Waring, as well as the JPTIS Dance Group, under the direction of Saran Jones, also performed during this school spotlight.

**Approval of Agenda:** Dr. Callicutt asked to adjust tonight's November 20<sup>th</sup> agenda as presented to include a presentation from TeleHealth Services during the Superintendent's Report section. Barbara Bryant made the motion to approve tonight's agenda as amended. Terrie Bryant provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve tonight's agenda as presented passed 6-0

#### **1. Approval of Consent Agenda:**

John Graham made the motion to accept the Consent agenda as presented. Debra McKnight provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve tonight's consent agenda as presented passed 6-0. The approved consent agenda contained minutes from the October 16, 2014 board meeting, Certified Personnel Report, and the Student Transfer Requests.

#### **2. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD**

##### **a) Board Chair Report**

##### **i. Report of Any Meetings Attended**

Paula Morris visited the Scranton Elementary School Fall Festival, Family Night at LifeLong Learning Center, and REMJH's Muffins for Mom event.

Barbara Bryant reminded the board that she and John Graham will be attending the SCSBA Advocacy and Business Meeting, to cast the two delegate votes for Florence School District Three, December 5, 2014. The two will bring back a report at the December 18<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Julia Mims attended the Family Night at LifeLong Learning Center (LLC), and she commented on the excellent job that Jay Alexander and his maintenance staff have done in maintaining the LLC building.

*ii. Request to Attend Any Meetings – None requested.*

- b) Public Participation—Be sure to sign up before opening session on the sign-in sheet provided as you enter the board room. Latasha Robinson with the LCHS Alumni Project – Ms. Robinson was present at tonight's board meeting to give board members an update on the events during the October Homecoming Alumni weekend. A plaque of appreciation was given to the FSD3 BOT for their support of the efforts of the LCHS Alumni group.

Dr. Deloris Brown with Lake City College Preparatory Academy (LCCPA) spoke before the FSD3 BOT and expressed her appreciation of the performances that opened tonight's board meeting. Dr. Brown expressed to the group present of the letter she received on August 8, 2014 stating that the LCCPA had lost its school's charter with the SC Public Charter District. Dr. Brown stated also that the parents of students attending LCCPA did not receive word of this until August 12<sup>th</sup>.

Elaine Epps, Parent of LCCPA students, also spoke to the board. Ms. Epps passed out a letter explaining the events, from the parent point of view, of the present situation concerning the LCCPA. Ms. Epps has asked for the board to look at the proposals within the letter, and she asked to be on the next month's board agenda for consideration of this situation.

c) Staff Reports

*i. 2013-2014 Audit Report – Jim Lawrimore, Lawrimore & Lawrimore*

Jim Lawrimore, Lawrimore and Lawrimore, the district's contracted independent financial auditor firm, conveyed to the FSD3 Board of Trustees the findings from the "financial audit of statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information" as of the year ended June 30, 2014. Mr. Lawrimore shared with board members that as of the end of year, June 30, 2014, **revenues did exceed expenditures**. Mr. Lawrimore gave a brief overview of this audit report to board members and the public present during this meeting. Board members were given the opportunity to have an audit book (hard copy) to take home; however, this entire audit will be available on the FSD3 website Friday, 11/21/2014, once the board has approved these results as presented by Mr. Lawrimore.

Mr. Lawrimore encouraged the board members to look over this audit report, and if anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact his firm.

*ii. Instructional Update – Ms. Laura Hickson, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction*

Ms. Hickson introduced Ms. Yvonne Scott, Director of Grants and Testing, to talk about the Lake City Graduation Initiative Grant. Ms. Scott reminded board members of this \$306,000 grant over a 3-year period. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase was dual enrollment with surrounding colleges and/or universities. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase really emphasizes what the FSD3's mission is: "Ensuring All Students are Prepared for Success: 100% College and Career Readiness".

The Lake City Graduation Initiative (LCGI) – Our Mission

We believe:

- All Students Can Learn and be Successful
- A large number of our students view college as impossible.
- Our students cannot just go to college, but complete college
- If Intentional Strategies are implemented, the future of FSD3 and this community will change in a positive way.

This year began with the College Boot Camp where Michael Wynn and his wife, Nina, began working with students to help organize their information to find the best college and/or university along with the most scholarship/grant funds available for the individual student. Mr. Wynn referred to these students as the group of students who will make the difference. Students present at this meeting tonight to talk about how this program has made a difference in their attitude and perception of education after high school were Mikayla Hanna, who is a Gates Millennium Scholar, and also a finalist of the Quest Bridge Scholar, Stephanie Dawkins, Joesha Myers, and Moesha Brown. Mr. Wynn emphasized the importance of talking higher education with students before high school, junior high, or even middle school. Ms. Scott informed board members that 30 students have already signed up for this cohort next year; therefore, FSD3 will be applying for this grant again.

Ms. Hickson continued after this presentation with her Instructional update to the board. The State School Report Card information was released November 14<sup>th</sup>. JPTMS, LCE, and MSE received a step lower rating, while OES, SES, and JCL each received a higher step improvement rating for 2014. The district, LCHS, and REMMS ratings did not change for 2014 from 2013.

Two celebrations – OES was named a "Reward School for Performance" for being one of the highest performing Title I schools in a given year with a grade of "A" or "B." LCHS

was also named a “Reward School for Progress” for demonstrating substantial progress from one year to the next and with a grade higher than “C.”

In the area of partnership opportunities, Ms. Hickson informed the group that the Lake City Partnership Council has formed a Community Teacher Council for the purpose of collaborating with teachers about ways to improve student achievement. There is a literacy-based project underway. FSD3 will partner with the LC Partnership Council to write a Community Block Grant of \$250,000 to support the New Tech program. In closing the Family Literacy held a workshop with parents on Tuesday.

Save the Dates:

- ✓ Fall Parent Academy Graduation & Volunteer Recognition Dinner – 12/17/2014, Wednesday, 6:00 am.
- ✓ District-wide Arbor Day Program – 12/5/2014, REMJH

*iii. Monthly Finance Report – Donna D. Sullivan, Director of Finance*

The September and October transparency reports are posted on the website. Checks for board members attendance tonight will be on the December 5<sup>th</sup> payroll. TAP check for qualifying certified employees will be given out tomorrow, November 21<sup>st</sup>.

An RFP for the district’s salary study was sent out previously. One bid was returned – Robert Davis.

*iv. Maintenance Report – Jay Alexander, Facilities Director*

Mr. Alexander reported to board members and the public present at tonight’s meeting of the relocation of a portable mobile unit from Lake City High School to Ronald E. McNair Junior High School due to increased student population at Ronald E. McNair Junior High School.

**d) Superintendent’s Report**

- i. TeleHealth* – Gaye Douglas, Coordinator for Telehealth and School Based Health Services, HopeHealth, presented to the group present a new opportunity to serve students through the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care. Ms. Douglas is offering for this program to come to FSD3 in order to serve students who do not receive regular healthcare. This would give these students the opportunity to receive needed health services from a physician without having to go to a doctor’s office. The diagnosis would be on the school campus using the technologies incorporated with this program. Ms. Douglas described it as ‘high-tech skyping’. Ms. Douglas further explained that this program is not meant to take patients from other providers, but to have students that do not regularly see a physician the opportunity to receive needed health care when the

situation requires it. This program is all in conjunction with Hope Health, which is also the same health company already partnered with FSD3 through Health Connections located on the Lake City High School campus.

*ii. Equity Law Suit*

This lawsuit took 21 years for the Supreme Court to adjudicate. In 1993 forty rural SC schools brought a law suit against the state of SC. The major argument is what is considered adequate and then minimally adequate education. This is the longest trial in SC history. It was a 3-2 decision. It is up to the districts to work with the General Assembly to fix this system. Parties are instructed to report back to the court on what a remedy is and the court should approve. Expect to hear from Carl Epps who will be guiding us.

*iii. Legislative Update*

Dr. Callicutt informed the board of the items concerning public education that will be up for discussion in the legislature this year:

Freedom of Information Act revisions

This past June, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled in Lambries v. Saluda County Council that a public body may amend the agenda during a regularly scheduled meeting, and, further, that a published agenda is not required for regularly scheduled meetings. The Supreme Court's opinion reversed a 2012 ruling by the SC Court of Appeals. The Appeals Court ruled that agendas are required for all meetings of public bodies and that amendment of the agenda during a meeting are not allowed.

*Position Statement* – SCSBA supports changes to the FOIA that reflect fairness to the public in accessing, requesting and receiving public information, as well as to the public bodies that, in many cases, must devote taxpayer-funded time and resources to fulfilling voluminous and overly burdensome requests for information. SCSBA does not support overly restrictive limitations on a board's ability to efficiently conduct its business.

Education funding reform-SCJET

The state levies a uniform millage (SUM) rate of 100 mills on all taxable property, excluding homestead or owner-occupied property, in every school district statewide. Millage rates currently range from more than 300 mills in Hampton Two to less than 100 mills in Beaufort County. SCJET would lower the millage rate for nearly all school districts and provide millions of dollars in tax relief to businesses and industries and for other non-owner occupied properties. Lower millage rates would provide a level playing field for school districts to recruit businesses and industries. It would also create a stable and sound revenue source for schools to better manage budgetary dips in the economy and limited local government's ability to negotiate away school property taxes through business incentives such as fee-in-lieu of taxes (FILOT) and multi-county parks. Existing state revenues, including the Education Finance Act (EFA), Homestead Exemption Fund (HEF), some of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) funds and other state funds are combined and allocated to districts per student. This would simplify

funding by reducing about 70 separate state funding sources to 12 and providing more funding flexibility to districts.

State allocates additional funding to make up the difference between the amount of property taxes currently generated for schools statewide and what the SUM (100 mills) would generate.

Once all of the state funds are combined and totaled, funding is distributed to districts on a per student basis, known as the Base Student funding (BSF). The amount each district receives is determined by totaling all of the state funds and dividing it on a Weighted Pupil Units (WPU) formula. WPUs are weightings assigned to students for various factors including grade level, poverty, gifted and talented, special needs and more. SCJET used WPUs that are recommended by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee and were essentially included in the governor's plan.

Transition or hold harmless funding will be necessary from the state to ensure that districts spending more than the BSF under SCJET do not receive less funds.

All other EIA and other state funding for programs not included in the EFA rollup are retained as separate, categorical funds. These are funds not allocated on a per pupil basis and include transportation, national board certification, 4K, etc.

Local funding would be restructured as follows:

- Local school boards would have the authority to levy local millage of up to 8% of the assessed value of taxable property, excluding owner-occupied property (4%) as required under Act 388, to fund district operations above what the state allocates. This is similar to the authority boards now have to fund capital expenses (8% constitutional debt limit).
- Local school boards needing to go above the 8% limit would be required to call for a referendum seeking voter approval. If approved, the property tax millage would apply to ALL taxable properties.
- Finally, SCJET incorporates a framework for establishing a statewide infrastructure bank to pay for school facility needs.

*Position statement* - SCSBA supports the passage of the SC Jobs, Education and Tax Act (SCJET) as a package plan. SCSBA believes it is imperative for the General Assembly to comprehensively reform the state's education funding structure, which includes revamping the tax structure, to provide more adequate and stable revenue sources.

#### Teacher issues

*Overview* – Public school teacher effectiveness is at the forefront of state and national discussions on how best to improve student achievement and public education. Recent debates in South Carolina have centered on holding teachers accountable through the evaluation process, recruiting and retaining the best teachers for the state's classrooms (including measures to affect teacher salaries), and streamlining the dismissal process to make it less cumbersome and fairer to the parties involved.

These and other teacher-related issues could come before the General Assembly beginning in January. During the 2013-2014 Legislative Session, a number of teacher-related bills were filed and debated but were not enacted before the session ended. These proposals, which could be refiled in January, would do the following:

- Require districts to adopt reduction in force (RIF) policies that may not include seniority as the most significant factor or teacher compensation as a factor;
- Provide that if a teacher is dismissed or does not have his/her contract renewed, the teacher is terminated and has not rights to appeal or protest the termination;
- Require a principal or district to notify parents whose children are being taught by an annual contract teacher undergoing a highly consequential evaluation or a continuing contract teacher undergoing a formal summative evaluation; and,
- Require that teachers be listed in a school district database (available to potential district employers) for such things as failing to pass certain evaluations, having a certificate suspended or revoked, or for a just-cause dismissal per statute.

SCSBA did NOT support these proposed bills.

#### Tuition tax credit and vouchers

*Overview* – After years of battling tuition tax credit/voucher proposals, an \$8 million private school tuition tax credit program for “exceptional needs students” was created through a budget proviso in 2013 and reauthorized in this year’s state budget.

*Position statement* – SCSBA opposes any state or federally-mandated efforts to directly or indirectly subsidize elementary or secondary private, religious or home schools with public funds.

#### Standards and testing

*Overview* – The SC Budget and Control Board on September 19 awarded a contract to ACT as the provider for the statewide assessment. This spring, students in grades 3-8 will take the ACT Aspire in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics and students in grade 11 will take the ACT. In 2015-16, ACT Aspire will be given in grades 3-9 and ACT in grade 11. In school year 2016-17, ACT Aspire will be given in grades 3-10 and ACT in grade 11.

*Talking points* – Schools that have invested thousands of dollars in CCSS do not have the time or resources to completely change the standards, especially when those standards are to be implemented next school year and must meet the federal definition of college and career ready or risk loss of the waiver from No Child Left Behind requirements.

We are concerned that tests have been purchased before for the new standards have been developed. While we appreciate the fact that the results of the test will not be

used to rate schools and districts under the state accountability system, they will be used to rate schools, district, teachers and principals beginning next school year under the federal accountability system. This is a major concern.

*iv. Update on Superintendent Search*

The time line for the Superintendent search was reviewed as follows:

- Establish and approve the timeline was completed in September Board meeting
- There was a public meeting to gather characteristics the community would like to see in the next superintendent for FSD3 took place on October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- A survey of preferred superintendent traits was conducted with all of the FSD3 employees.
- During the October Board Meeting the board established the criteria for the superintendent position.
- In November the superintendent position will be advertised with a final date for submitted applications to be December 1, 2014.
- In the December board meeting, board members will screen the applications.
- January – the board will select at least three candidates for interviews
- February – the board will select a superintendent as well as negotiate a contract

**e) Action Items**

- *2013-2014 Audit Report*

Barbara Bryant made the motion to approve the audit report for 2013-2014 presented by Jim Lawrimore. Paula Morris provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present approved this motion. The motion to approve the 2013-2014 audit report as presented passed 6-0.

**f) Public Comment** – *To comment on items that appeared on the agenda*

No comments

**g)** There being no further business for the board of trustees, Barbara Bryant made the motion to adjourn. Debra McKnight provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to adjourn passed 6-0.

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Date approved

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Julia Mims, Chair

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Shelia Knotts, Recording Clerk

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Paula Morris, Secretary