

Berkeley County School Board Meeting

June 13, 2017

Observer: Mev McIntosh

All board members present except Frank Wright (District 8)

Cabinet members present – Jacque Carlen (finance), Glenda Levine (HR), Kevin O’Gorman (Instruction and Accountability)

Actions Taken

- **Minutes**: Board approved minutes from May 23 regular board meeting.
- **Recognition**: Legacy Builders recognized Za’Kwon Bowens, National Read 180 Student Award Winner, one of 15 recipients nationwide; Hanahan High School Softball, Tennis, and Track teams, class AAA 2017 state champs
- **Public Comments**: Citizens comments included former educator Jeremy Cantrell explaining to the board the challenges of being a teacher, his reasons for leaving the profession, and his six suggestions for the future of BCSD: fight against standardized testing; provide more autonomy to teachers; raise hiring practices within the profession; raise teacher pay; measure student success in the long-run rather than through standardized testing; eliminate school choice due to the detriments it has on traditional public education.
- **Financial Services**: Financial services representative Jacque Carlen presented items for action – board approved bid package for roof replacement/repairs to Stratford High School and software package to streamline HR, finance, payroll, bookkeeping, procurement, etc. First 7 years of software package deal = \$6M+

Board approved state funding flexibility provisos 1.28, 1.33, and 1A.14 allowing the district to move funds as appropriate among accounts.

Carlen presented FY 2016-17 budget update as of 5/31/17 to board – this PowerPoint included funds received from FILOT and county revenues (\$5.6 M approx.), special revenues from federal funds (Special Education, Titles I, II, and III); state funds (EIA totaling \$17M), etc.

Carlen noted some figures in presentation were incorrect and promised to have updated PowerPoint available to public and board members via Board Docs soon.

Carlen also presented the first reading of FY 2017-18 General Fund Budget. She noted the district is operating on the same millage. Additional funds have been set aside for openings of three schools (Philip Simmons High, Foxbank Elementary, Bowen's Corner Elementary). Funding for retirement goes directly to PEBA, which will offer credits to districts. Budget also reflects 1% increase in retirement contributions from employer (BCSD) to 2020. She noted the base student cost (BSC) is \$2425. **This is \$450 underfunded per child; state legislature continues to underfund BSC, burdening school districts to make up the remaining cost.**

Total amount of school-level requests approximately \$3.7M

Total amount of district-level requests approximately \$3.2M. This included Special Education teachers, ESOL teachers, administrative assistants (school-level administrators on teacher contract with supplement to make up for additional work days), office clerks, and bus drivers and bus assistants. Board members Condor and Spann addressed their concerns about bus driver pay, safety of buses, and students from Head Start unmonitored on buses. Barrow responded stating that transportation department, including bus drivers and supervisors received a "significant raise in 2016-17". Board chair Wofford requested a "more tedious and detailed budget listing" from finance. Carlen agreed to provide this to the board and public.

Note Comment: Board member Condor seemed confused as to the role of an administrative assistant. Interim Superintendent Jackson offered clarification. She also inquired where the two office clerks and administrative assistants would be placed. Jackson said at this time, it was not clear and that information would be provided as soon as it was available.

Carlen noted, "Every employee will see between a 2.5-3% increase in STEP/COLA for 2017-18 school year." (STEP increase and cost of living allowance).

The first reading of General Fund Budget for FY 2017-18 was approved unanimously.

- **State/Federal Report Card:**

Report Card Presentation: Chief Academic Officer Kevin O'Gorman presented the state/federal report card update. He noted that for 2017-18, a kindergarten assessment will be implemented but it is unknown what this assessment will entail.

This sparked strong comments from Board Chair Wofford, “testing little babies when they should be playing...”

Later in the presentation, board members realized that it is *not* the district’s fault for all the changes and additional testing, but rather decisions made by the SC Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee. He also pointed out that final information will not be known until September 2018. The House and Senate proposals for standardized testing varies, and there will be continued debate over these proposals. **The academic school year will begin without districts statewide knowing what testing will be mandated by the state.**

ACT and WorkKeys: **Additionally, it is not known if for the 2017-18 school year if grades 3-8 will continue to take PASS nor it is known if high school students will still take ACT and WorkKeys.**

On the state report card, new reporting includes lexiles and quantiles of students. Teachers prefer these as “tangible measures” – examples include DRA, AR, etc.

Board member Spann was confused as to quartiles and quantiles. O’Gorman provided clarification.

Personalized Pathways: Personalized Pathways is another new addition for education in SC. This included seals of distinction for graduates, beginning with the freshman class 2018-19. This will include Honor, College, and Career level seals. This also means that core classes (ELA, math) must be customized to incorporate the specified Pathway in which a student will choose. For example, an English Language Arts freshman course for a student in the Law Enforcement Career Pathway will include both ELA standards specific to the needs of the Law Enforcement Pathway.

A state employability credential will be offered to students who are not on a high school diploma track. This includes students of severe special needs.

South Carolina is working to combine the state and federal report card into one document.

Test Frequency: A long discussion among board members ensued over the frequency of testing. Mr. Cantrell’s comments on too much testing also added fuel to board members’ concerns. O’Gorman explained again that these mandates first come from the federal level (ELA, math, and science testing required by federal; then details of these assessments, including type and frequency, are determined by SC Department of Education and Education Oversight Committee).

He clarified this information and explained the district expectations include two benchmarks for grades 3-8 in math and ELA only, and two benchmarks for high school in the four core subjects (math, ELA, science, social studies).

Board member Barrow expressed his concern over many individuals in the public still believing that Common Core standards are used in SC schools. O’Gorman pulled up the slide that confirmed Common Core ended in 2014. *Two current board members ran their campaigns in October 2016 to “end Common Core in our schools.”*

- Superintendent’s Report: Interim superintendent Jackson presented the superintendent’s report.
- Board Chair Report: Board chair Wofford presented the board chair report, requesting a special meeting on June 20 at 5 pm to review applications for superintendent and to set calendar dates with board members for 1st and 2nd rounds of superintendent candidates interviews.
- Executive Session: Executive session began and ended around 10:45 pm.

Board chair Wofford stated “no action was taken in executive session” and the board moved to approve the proposed organizational chart and employment matters impacted by the new organizational chart. She stated the organizational chart would not be released until all employees impacted are notified first. These include the 12-14 positions to be cut as stated in May 2017.

- **Other Business**: The board agreed to table the 14 student attendance appeals until the next executive session.

Meeting adjourned around 11 pm.