

The District Five Board of Trustees met Monday, March 28, 2022 at Duncan Elementary School at 100 S. Danzler Road, Duncan, SC at 6:30 p.m.

The following members were present:

Mr. Jeff Boland
Mr. Mark Cleveland
Mr. Scott Clement
Mrs. Meredith Gergley
Mr. Kevin Goode
Dr. Millie Malone
Mr. Ott Sizemore
Mrs. Sherri Taunton
Mr. Derek Watchorn

1. **Call to Order and Notice to Media:** Mr. Jeff Boland, Chairman, called the meeting to order and read the Notice to Media:

Spartanburg County School District Five has complied with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act in notification of the media and other interested parties and organizations and posting of the agenda.

2. **Open Meeting with Prayer:** Mr. Kevin Goode led the opening prayer.

3. **Consent Agenda**

- a) **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved as presented.

- b) **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the February 28, 2022 meeting were approved as presented.

4. **Public Comment:** Chairman Jeff Boland introduced Mr. Bill Cureton, who requested to address the board in advance of the meeting. Mr. Cureton congratulated the new board members for their new positions and wished them well. He also commended Dr. Gary on his leadership during his time in District Five. Mr. Cureton asked the board and district to consider an athletic facilities long range plan, and to be proactive instead of reactionary, in regard to athletic facilities.

He also addressed the topic of transparency and made the suggestion to have a monthly citizens agenda. In addition, Mr. Cureton suggested that the district live stream and video archive board meetings.

Mr. Cureton recommended having monthly committee updates, and also encouraged the board to do everything possible in open session, instead of executive session.

At the conclusion of Mr. Cureton's remarks, Chairman Boland thanked him for all of his volunteer work within the district.

5. Action Items:

- a) **Consider Approval of District Strategic Plan Updates:** Dr. Scott Smith, Director of Accountability, Assessment, and Research, presented information pertaining to the District's Strategic Plan Update. Dr. Smith provided detailed background information about the process and planning involved in creating the Strategic Plan updates. Dr. Smith's report included the district's beliefs, mission, and vision statements as well as goals, strategies, and action steps taken to create the plan.

Dr. Smith informed the board that there were 68 people involved in the planning, to include three board members (Mr. Boland, Mr. Sizemore, and Mrs. Taunton), community members, District Office staff, principals, teachers, parents, and local community college representatives.

Dr. Smith provided information on elementary and secondary achievement data, and outlined what the new goals would be for the 2022-2027 plan. He also provided the new goals set for the Gifted and Talented Education program, Teacher/Administrator Quality, and School Climate. The full plan is available on the district website, and as an attachment to the board minutes.

After reviewing the plan updates, Dr. Smith stated that the administration recommends that the board approve the proposed 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, as presented.

A motion was made by Mrs. Meredith Gergley to accept the recommendation of the administration and approve the District's Five-Year Strategic Plan. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mark Cleveland.

Chairman Boland opened the floor for questions. Board members raised questions pertaining to how heavily the district relies on iReady data, how the data gets reported back, how teachers are using iReady in lesson planning, helping students not feel pressured by the assessments, and about student access to the software over the summer months. There were also questions about volunteers being in the schools now that Covid restrictions have been lifted.

After Dr. Smith and district administration answered the questions, Mr. Boland asked the board to vote on the motion. The motion was approved unanimously 9-0.

- b) **Consider Approval of Revised Bell Schedule:** Dr. Greg Wood, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, provided details to the board about revising the current bell schedule, in hopes of alleviating traffic issues during drop off and dismissal, and allowing buses to pick up high school students earlier so they aren't so late getting home.

Dr. Wood reviewed the current bell schedule and addressed the traffic concerns at Danzler Rd. and Highway 290; Shoals Road; and Holly Springs Road. He explained all of the factors that went into consideration during the planning meetings for the new proposed schedule, to include the shared schedule for the high school with R.D. Anderson, the Alternative School, and Dual Enrollment programs, student supervision, parent's traveling to multiple schools, the length of the academic day, and the 2024 grade configuration changes.

If approved, the new schedule would allow for buses to pick up high school students earlier after school, help with the transition of new grade structure in 2024, and reduce traffic at the Berry Shoals/Florence Chapel, Lyman/D.R. Hill, and Danzler Rd./290 locations.

Following his presentation, Dr. Wood stated that the administration recommends that the board approve the revised bell schedule beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, as presented.

Mrs. Meredith Gergley made a motion to accept the recommendation of the administration and approve the revised bell schedule, which will begin the 2022-2023 school year. The motion was seconded by Dr. Millie Malone.

Questions were raised pertaining to students being allowed to drop off at one school and walk over to their school next door when on the same campus, as well as concerns about the middle and high schools starting at the same time. In addition, questions were raised about elementary students having to wait on buses earlier than they do now, and the issue of needing more drivers/buses.

After Dr. Wood, Dr. Gary, and district administration had addressed each question, Mr. Boland asked the board for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously 9-0.

- c) **Consideration of Letter Regarding Education Funding:** Dr. Gary informed the board that the Spartanburg County superintendents had invited the local senators to meet to discuss their concerns with the new funding model proposed by the General Assembly. Dr. Gary, Mr. David Hayes (Chief Financial Officer) and Mr. Mark

Cleveland (Board Vice Chair), along with the other Spartanburg School District representatives, met with Senator Shane Martin, as he was the only senator in attendance, on March 23. Senator Martin seemed to be supportive of the districts' concerns about the shortfalls created by the new funding model.

Mr. Hayes provided details on the current funding plan vs. the proposed state funding method and how it will affect District Five Schools. He reported that the district is projected to receive \$41,335,837 in state aid to classrooms, as well as an additional \$298,354 for retiree insurance, providing an increase in state funding of \$1,309,793.

Using the proposed revenues vs. expenditures under the new model, Mr. Hayes provided a breakdown of the General Fund state mandated increases, which include an 18.1% increase in health insurance, one percent increase in retirement, teacher step increases and related fringe benefits, EIA Students at Risk Fund, and EIA Aid to the District Fund, totaling \$3,169,888. Under the new plan, this would create a shortfall of \$1,860,095 without providing any raise to employees. If the district were to provide the proposed \$4,000 teacher salary increase, at an additional expense of \$3,894,000, the district's shortfall would increase to \$5,754,095.

Dr. Gary expressed his desire for teachers to receive the proposed \$4,000 raise and how much they deserve it. He also reported that our current salary scale for teachers is currently 13% above the state minimum. However, there is much concern over the shortfall in the budget if the state does not fully fund their proposed mandates. For that reason, Dr. Gary asked the board to consider signing a letter to the State Legislators encouraging them to fully fund the \$4,000 teacher raise and extra fringe benefits.

Chairman Boland read the letter in its entirety (see attached) and then asked if there was a motion to approve.

Mrs. Meredith Gergley made a motion that the Board of Trustees write a letter to our local delegation and other elected officials requesting that they fully fund increases to teacher pay, fringe benefits, and insurance for all teachers in our state. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mark Cleveland.

Mr. Cleveland also expressed his concern about this matter, after having attended the meeting with local districts, and applauded Senator Martin for taking time to meet with them.

After questions and discussion, Chairman Boland asked for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously 9-0.

6. Reports:

- a) **Naming of New Middle School:** Mrs. Melissa Robinette, Director of Public Relations, presented information to the board about the naming of the new middle

school near Abner Creek Academy. Mrs. Robinette outlined the process used when the school board named Abner Creek Elementary School in 2006. She also provided important key points from board policy FF - Naming Facilities. At the conclusion of her presentation, Mrs. Robinette reported that in consideration of the board policy, and the elementary campus next door, district administration will recommend the name Abner Creek Middle School for board approval at the meeting on April 25, 2022.

At 8:26 p.m., Mrs. Meredith Gergley made a motion to move into executive session to discuss employment matters in reference to new hires, promotions, and resignations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mark Cleveland and passed unanimously 9-0.

7. Executive Session

- a) **Discussion of Employment Matters in Reference to New Hires, Promotions, and Resignations:**

8. Return to Public Session:

A motion was made by Mrs. Meredith Gergley to leave Executive Session and return to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scott Clement and approved unanimously 9-0.

- a) **Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session:** A motion was made by Mrs. Meredith Gergley, seconded by Mrs. Sherri Taunton, and approved unanimously (9-0) to accept the recommendation of the administration and offer contracts to the employees, as presented in executive session.

There being no further business, Mrs. Meredith Gergley made a motion to adjourn from the March board meeting at 9:37 pm. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Sherri Taunton and approved unanimously (9-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Meredith Gergley
Secretary

Submitted by: Mrs. April Peel