

**HORRY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
BOARD WORK SESSION**

October 11, 2021
District Office
335 Four Mile Road
Conway, SC 29526

Board of Education

Ken Richardson	
Shanda Allen	Neil James
David Cox	Helen Smith
James Edwards	Sherrie Todd
Janet Graham	Melanie Wellons

Horry County Schools Staff

Mary J. Anderson	Leann Hill
David Beaty	Rick Maxey
Lisa Bourcier	Boone Myrick
Daryl C. Brown	Lucas Richardson
John Gardner	Kenneth Generette

As required by SC Law 30-4-80, local news media were informed of the date, time, place, and agenda of this meeting. Copies of the agenda were posted at the District Office and distributed to schools for posting.

1. OPENING - October 11, 2021 - 6:00 PM - CALL TO ORDER - BOARD MEETING ROOM

Chairman Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Todd offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the October 11, 2021, agenda as presented.

Moved By: Shanda Allen

Seconded By: Helen Smith

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made to approve the September 27, 2021, minutes as presented.

Moved By: David Cox

Seconded By: Janet Graham

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

2. DISCUSSION

a. Finance Committee Meeting Report - Mr. Edwards

Mr. Edwards shared information from the Finance Committee Meeting held earlier today. The topics discussed were the preliminary June 30, 2021, General Fund Balance, the Education Capital Improvement Sales and Use Tax Collections, and the Model School District Procurement Code. He added that the Committee voted to approve the submission of the HCS Procurement Code and Regulations for a written opinion from State Fiscal Accountability Authority (SFAA). Once the SFAA provides an opinion that the code is substantially similar to the provisions of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code and Regulations, the code will be brought before the full Board for approval and adoption.

Mr. Richardson added that he had spoken with the County Treasurer, Ms. Angie Jones, and she reported that tax notices have been distributed and collections are going well.

b. Monitoring Report R-8: Perception of Stakeholders - Ms. Myrick

Monitoring Report R-8: Perception of Stakeholders was provided. No questions were posed by the Board.

c. Monitoring Report OE-10: Instructional Programs - Ms. Myrick

Monitoring Report OE-10: Instructional Program was provided. No questions were posed by the Board.

d. Monitoring Report OE-13: Quarterly Facilities Report - Mr. Burch

Monitoring Report OE-13: Quarterly Facilities Report for Quarter 3 of 2021 was provided. No questions were posed by the Board.

e. Request City of Conway to Annex the New Whittemore Park Middle School Site - Mr. Burch

Mr. Burch addressed the Board regarding the property for the new Whittemore Park Middle School. He reminded the Board that on June 21, 2021, the Board approved the allocation of funds for a new middle school to replace Whittemore Park Middle School. Property on El Bethel Road has been purchased over the past year to accommodate a middle school. The overall property is 39 acres, split into three separate parcels. The three parcels need to be combined to accommodate the planning and design needs of the school. One of the parcels is already inside the city limits of Conway. For efficiency of design and access to public utilities and services, the remaining two parcels should be annexed into the City of Conway. As part of the annexation request of the City, the three parcels will be combined into one parcel and rezoned to Institutional zoning.

Mr. James asked about the time frame for the annexation process. Mr. Burch answered that he anticipates the entire process to be complete by the end of the year.

f. Update on COVID-19 Topics - Mr. Generette and Dr. Maxey

Mr. Generette updated the Board on legal cases that have gone before the South Carolina Supreme Court and Federal District Court in reference to mask mandates and Proviso 1.108. He shared the SC Supreme Court dismissed a mask mandate instituted by the City of Columbia. The ruling impacts school districts in South Carolina. Before the S.C. Supreme Court ruling on a case concerning Proviso 1.108, a Federal District Court heard a matter on the discrimination case brought by the ACLU on behalf of students with disabilities. A federal judge ruled that Proviso 1.108 discriminates against students with disabilities. Two days after the federal ruling, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled that Proviso 1.108 was constitutional and schools could find alternate funding sources to implement a mask mandate but declined giving advice to districts on how to go about finding alternate funding sources. Appeals filed by the Attorney General and Governor were unsuccessful.

Dr. Maxey then shared data which depicted the student and staff positive COVID-19 rates since August 19, 2021, rates which reached an apex on September 3, 2021. Since that high point, he noted the steady decline in rates, averaging a drop of 26.5 positive COVID-19 cases per day. He also shared a slide that shows the quarantine data which mirror the decline seen in positive COVID-19 cases.

He indicated that the recent Federal District Court's ruling now permits local decisions regarding mask mandates. Dr. Maxey stated that given this flexibility the district is now able to make a decision regarding the use of masks. However, he pointed out that should mask requirements become necessary for HCS, a decision would be made based on need and on a school-by-school basis, not district wide. Presently, given the current decline in positive COVID-19 case numbers, Dr. Maxey indicated that he would not recommend a mask mandate in any district schools at this time. He noted, however, that in accordance with the district's *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services* plan, schools will be monitored and precautionary practices will remain in place as important tools in the fight against the virus. Dr. Maxey concluded by stating that he is very optimistic with the current conditions and is hopeful that the district continues to improve.

Mr. Richardson reiterated the importance of precautionary practices, especially the need for parents to keep children home if their children are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms. Dr. Maxey agreed and commented that while the pandemic is not over, HCS is making excellent progress in returning to normalcy, as evidenced by his observations during school visits by Board and staff members.

g. Superintendent's Report

1. Recognitions

i. National Board Certification for School Nurses - Melanie O'Tuel, St. James Elementary School Nurse

Dr. Maxey congratulated Melanie O'Tuel, the St. James Elementary School nurse, for successfully passing the National Certified School Nurse (NCSN) Examination offered by the National Board for Certification of School Nurses.

ii. American Heart Association Award

For the fourth consecutive year, Horry County Schools has been awarded the Top Lifesaving School District by the American Heart Association in South Carolina for the 2020-21 school year. HCS had over 31 schools participate in the Kids Heart Challenge, and over 2,800 students signed up online to take the health challenge. Dr. Maxey congratulated all schools and noted that the top five schools were Forestbrook Elementary, Seaside Elementary, Ocean Drive Elementary, Conway Elementary, and St. James Elementary.

iii. Ed-Op Days for Juniors and Seniors

Dr. Maxey shared that the college application season runs from now through December. Over the next several months, high schools across the county will host college application day events to assist students with the college application process. The goal of College Application Month is to provide a forum for all South Carolina seniors to complete and file college applications. Our high schools also hosted Ed-Op events last week, with over 40 university and college representatives in attendance offering opportunities for seniors and juniors to learn more about higher education. Dr. Maxey thanked Tonya Pickett, Director of Guidance for HCS, Derek Doss of CCU, the Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Administration Officers, the high school administrators, and the institutions that participated in this event.

iv. October Events

- Red Ribbon Week - October 23rd - 31st

Dr. Maxey shared that schools across the county will engage students with fun and age-appropriate drug prevention information and activities the week of October 23rd – 31st. HCS encourages parents to discuss the dangers of drug use and help spread the word about the importance of being healthy and drug-free.

- National Bullying Prevention Month

Every October, schools and organizations across the country join in observing National Bullying Prevention Month. Dr. Maxey shared that throughout this month, our schools will participate in various events to educate our students about bullying/cyberbullying and increase awareness of the prevalence and impact of all forms of bullying on children of all ages.

- National Principals Month

In recognition of National Principals Month, Dr. Maxey displayed an image from the website showing every HCS principal. He stated that principals are among the hardest working yet often least recognized individuals in education. He encouraged everyone to let the principals know how much they are appreciated.

- *The Person Behind the Title*

Dr. Maxey asked Mr. Generette to introduce the clip of the video currently in production called *The Person Behind the Title*. Mr. Generette shared that staff is currently filming and editing the piece which will be aired on HCS TV and social media. It will showcase each

principal, as well as the Superintendent, giving viewers a little insight into the person behind the administrative title.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. Review of Applications for District 3 Board Vacancy
- b. Potential Sale of Property
- c. Receipt of Legal Advice Regarding Current Litigation

A motion was made to move into Executive Session at 6:35 p.m.

Moved by: Mr. Edwards

Seconded by: Mr. James

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

4. ADJOURN BOARD WORK SESSION AND CONVENE SPECIAL-CALLED MEETING

A motion was made to move into the Business portion of the meeting at 7:41 p.m. It should be noted no action was taken and no decision were made during Executive Session. Mrs. Todd recused herself from item c. "Receipt of Legal Advice Regarding Current Litigation."

Moved by: Mrs. Allen

Seconded by: Mrs. Wellons

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

5. BUSINESS

- a. Potential Action Regarding Current Litigation - Mr. Generette

A motion was made to approve the mediation settlement agreement in the matter of Todd vs. the Horry County Board of Education, in the amount of \$260,000 in exchange for the matter to be dismissed with prejudice as well as authorize the pursuit of any claims regarding insurance coverage challenges in connection with this matter.

Moved by: Mr. Cox

Seconded by: Mrs. Allen

Board Action: Motion Passed; Mrs. Todd abstained.

b. Selection of Applicants to Interview for District 3 Board Vacancy - Mr. Richardson

A motion was made to interview Ms. Ann MacDonald, Mr. Michael Ryhal, and Ms. Tracy Winters for the District 3 Board Vacancy. The Board Chairman did not vote on this item.

Moved by: Mr. James

Seconded by: Mr. Cox

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

c. Appointment of Advisory Board Members - Board Members

A motion was made by Mrs. Wellons to reappointment Tricia Mack to the Carolina Forest Advisory Board for 2-year term.

Moved by: Mrs. Wellons

Seconded by: Mrs. Smith

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

6. CONSENT

a. Personnel Recommendations

b. Education Fund Allocation - District 5

c. Education Fund Allocation - District 8

A motion was made to accept the consent agenda as presented. The Board Chairman did not vote on this item.

Moved by: Mr. James

Seconded by: Mrs. Graham

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

7. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the October 11, 2021, meeting at 7:46 p.m. The Board Chairman did not vote on this item.

Moved by: Mrs. Graham

Seconded by: Mrs. Allen

Board Action: Carried Unanimously

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

A. Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting, 3:00 PM, October 25, 2021, District Office, C-300

B. Facilities Committee Meeting, 4:00 PM, October 25, 2021, District Office, C-300

C. Board Meeting, 6:00 PM, October 25, 2021, District Office, Board Room