

HORRY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES **BOARD DEVELOPMENT RETREAT** **District Office** **September 21, 2015**

The following persons were present:

Board of Education

Joe DeFeo, Chairman	Holly Heniford	John Poston
David Cox, Vice-Chair	Neil James	Pam Timms
Jeffrey Garland	Kay Loftus	Sherrie Todd
Janet Graham	Janice Morreale	Ray Winters

Horry County Schools' Staff

Mary Anderson	John Gardner	Lucas Richardson
Edward Boyd	Kenny Generette	Rhonda Snowden
Daryl Brown	Rick Maxey	Tammy Trulove
Carolyn Chestnut	Boone Myrick	Mark Wolfe

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 SEPTEMBER 21, 2015, AT 6:00 P.M. – CALL TO ORDER

A. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman DeFeo called the meeting to order. Mr. James gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Ms. Heniford to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Garland and carried unanimously. The Board Chair did not cast a vote on this item.

2. DISCUSSION

Dr. Maxey shared that the Chief Officers are present so that the administration and Board can have informal conversations about topics that Board members wish to discuss and are of interest to the District.

A. Board Meetings/Board Policy Governance Items

1) Meeting Structure (Regular Meetings vs. Work Sessions)

We currently are using the practice of having a Board meeting structure with two components, i.e., a work session where topics are discussed and there is not a business meeting with the purpose of acting on those topics, and then we have a two-week intervening time for Board members to reflect and gather additional information if needed before the topic comes back at a regular meeting as a business item and is voted upon. Dr. Maxey pointed out that when we have a work session, there may be a need to ask the Board to consider an item for a vote. When this occurs, we

will insert an item on the agenda for a special called business meeting in order for the Board to vote on consent agenda items, or other items, such as personnel matters, procurement matters, etc.

2) Public Comments

Mr. Generette shared that we want to be sure that should a stakeholder wish to speak during the public comments portion of our regular meetings, that we allow them to be heard. In the spirit of the sunshine laws, we want to be sure we give the public the opportunity to participate. Persons can request to speak by completing a form online or by completing a request to speak when they arrive at a Board meeting. They are requested to submit the form at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting. The form spells out the guidelines for public comments. Following discussion of this topic, the Board decided to continue with public comments along the current guidelines that are in place. The Board has asked that should requests to speak come in to the Board secretary prior to a Board meeting, then the Board secretary will forward that information to Board members so they are informed of the concern prior to the Board meeting.

3) Advisory Boards

a. Purpose

Discussion was held regarding the purpose of Advisory Boards. Mr. DeFeo stated that we will add to the next business agenda to discuss whether or not we will have term limits on Advisory Board members.

b. Structure

Discussion was held regarding representation on the Advisory Boards by program schools, such as the Academies, Early College, and Scholars. Mr. Generette stated that Early College and Scholars do have advisory type councils where they get feedback from the community and parents. A Board member stated that the Academies would like to have representation on the Advisory Boards. Another Board member shared that the Advisory Boards are of great value and the Board needs to be mindful that Advisory Board members are also parents/guardians.

c. Community Member Term Length

Ms. Timms asked that the Board consider extending the term length for the Community Members from a one-year term to a two-year term.

4) Board Performance Sheets

Discussion was held on the use of the Board performance sheets, and if the Board desires to use this tool as a gauge to their effectiveness. If the Board is going to use this tool, then all Board members need to complete the forms following each Board meeting. If the Board does not wish to utilize this tool, then the Board needs to do away with this process. Board policy states that the Board will evaluate themselves. If the Board is not going to use this tool, it was suggested that the requirement for evaluation be pulled out of the policy. Another suggestion was for the Board to self-evaluate by holding discussion during the Board Retreats to discuss how the Board can make itself better. It was suggested that the Board Performance sheets be tallied and included in the Board minutes. This would allow Board members the opportunity to discuss the comments during the time of approval of the minutes. It was suggested that at each Board Retreat, this will also be an item on the agenda to discuss the previous tally information and comments. Mr. DeFeo stated

that this should be added to Board Governance. The administration should come up with a motion and we can discuss this again before it is voted on. It was suggested that Board members add their name on the form.

B. Curriculum/Instruction

1) Standardized Testing Limits

Discussion was held regarding state mandated testing and elective standardized testing. The question to the Board was if the Board might wish to give some direction to the administration regarding standardized testing. Edward Boyd shared information about all assessments the District uses. Three major assessments that the District uses that are not state or federal regulations are MAP, Dibels in the primary grades, and benchmark science and social studies tests in elementary and middle school grades. MAP is not required, but every District in South Carolina gives the MAP test. The State gives every District formative assessment money and we use that money for MAP, which covers approximately 75% of the cost. Many of our parents do not want to know how their child is doing in comparison to other children in this State. They want to know how their children are doing in comparison to children in other states. MAP allows for comparisons that are not available with mandated testing. The thought of the administration is that we need to continue with the MAP assessment until we get a better understanding of what the State is going to do regarding assessment long term. Mr. DeFeo stated he would like proof if the elective testing is worthwhile and would also like to know how teachers feel about this. Mr. James asked that if we have a pacing guide, which says we need to cover a set amount of materials, and we are assessing the students on a weekly quiz or end-of-chapter tests, are we obtaining the same type of data. Ms. Myrick stated that we can look at that to be sure we are not duplicating our benchmarks. Ms. Morreale asked the amount of time needed to administer Dibels and questions the need for it to be administered three times per year. Ms. Myrick will get that information and stated that we can look at the Dibels testing to review the benefits of it. Ms. Morreale asked why the District gives the MAP testing three times per year. Mr. Boyd shared that we can determine how many times per year, up to six, that we give MAP testing. Some schools have chosen not to do the winter testing and the following year they chose to again do the testing three times per year. Dr. Maxey asked that he be allowed to go back and meet with his staff to discuss how we can collect data from our teachers and from our principals and then report back to the Board, possibly by the meeting after next, on what kind of progress we have made in gathering information. Mr. Poston charged this Board that when the information comes back that the Board act upon it.

2) STEM Program Proposal

Dr. Maxey had the opportunity to go to Horry Georgetown Technical College last week for a discussion on programs that HGTC plans to offer for their students that deal with engineering related fields. Dr. Maxey shared that it is critical that we provide all of our students with opportunities for education, and sometimes the four-year program is not the route that pays off for all students. Some students with four-year degrees return to the technical schools to gain a technical degree in order to gain employment. There is a great demand for students pursuing STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) at all levels. We have a STEM program at AAST. This past year, more than 500 students applied for the program. We were only able to accept 150 students. Dr. Maxey asked that the Board consider allowing us to explore having a STEM program located at Conway High School. This will allow for some of the student overflow from AAST and to allow students from the inland schools the opportunity to participate in this type of

program. The facility at Conway High with the new building in the back can accommodate this type of program. Dr. Maxey also wants us to develop a measure to determine the success of the program. Mr. DeFeo stated for the administration to move forward with pursuing this idea. He also suggested that we look at some of the smaller programs to determine those that need to be eliminated due to no longer being successful.

3) AAST – STEM vs. Majors Allotment

Mr. Poston shared a concern that students enrolled in the STEM program at AAST are filling the greater number of the slots that were allocated for juniors and seniors. They have fantastic facilities there. Students who wish to participate in the programs at AAST are being shut out of the opportunity to participate due to the slots that are being absorbed by the STEM students. The Board needs to decide if they wish for AAST going forward to serve as a majors program for our juniors and seniors, and if so, we will need to hold a certain number of slots for those students who are interested to be able to participate in those programs. Dr. Maxey asked that while we look at the STEM proposal for the Conway area that we look at these together and see how they can mutually co-exist without competing and that we give opportunities to as many students as we can. Another Board member added that we need to give those juniors and seniors who want to attend AAST the opportunity for that experience. Dr. Maxey shared that we will look at balancing the needs of the programs and STEM so that there is sufficient space available for the majors students along with the STEM students at AAST. Mr. Poston asked if it is reasonable that we will hold a set number of slots for the majors. Dr. Maxey added that it is a possibility, however, it may be that rather than encouraging movement towards more majors, we may encourage movement towards more dual credits, having a college professor come out, or some other direction. Mr. Poston shared that he hears from his parents that with STEM, Early College, and Scholars, we are asking students to make a decision in 8th grade as to their academic direction. Mr. Poston hopes that we will continue to give juniors and seniors opportunities to make decisions throughout their high school career. Mr. DeFeo added that we may wish to look at merging the entertainment technology program with the theater program at Carolina Forest High or ATA.

C. Support Services

Mr. James reported that the first two items below came out of the Facilities Committee meeting. Mr. Brown and Mr. Wolfe will have information to share with the Board with regard to consolidation of the three facilities. There was previous discussion about reroofing the Facilities building at an estimated cost of \$500,000. It needs to be done, but this also prompted the question of what the long range plans are because we have other facilities that are aging.

1) Consolidation of Three Facilities (Facility Department/Records/Old District Office)

Mark Wolfe shared that there has been discussion about some of our facilities that have exceeded their life expectancy and have become a burden to us to maintain, economically and physically, such as Loris Education Center. Out of the brainstorming session, there was a suggestion of merging the Facilities department, Records, and the staff located at the old District Office, into a facility beside the current District Office. The property next door to the current District Office is available at this time. This approach would also help us to get some of the older facilities out of our inventory. While giving thought to this idea, we came up with needs for a facility with approximately 95,000 to 110,000 square feet. This has merely been conversation at this point. We could consider selling some of the properties we no longer need. The thought is that such a facility would cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$10 million. This is all very preliminary at this point.

Mr. DeFeo shared that he feels it would be much easier to manage the supervision of the District if district functions were located at the same site. Mr. James added that the Facilities complex is not an ideal site for our buses and larger equipment to be coming in and out of due to the traffic. He feels getting off of the main road would offer some safety aspects. Another point is the old District Office was built in the late 50s or early 60s. It is a very old and is probably in need of remodeling now. The Records Center is an old feed and grain building that has been around for a long time. If these three facilities were consolidated, there would be some efficiency in heating and cooling, as well as function of the buildings. Mr. Poston stated that while he agrees with the points made, he wants to be very careful that the Board not forget that its function is educating children. Some Board members shared they have concerns about spending funds for this purpose while we have school building needs. Mr. James added that this is being mentioned as a concept and was brought forth for discussion purposes. There is no timeline attached. Ms. Heniford added that the roof needs to be replaced just to protect the integrity of the building and that the rushing water in the building is creating a safety hazard and threatens materials housed in the building. Materials have to be elevated due to the possibility of water damage. Mr. DeFeo stated that he agrees with the points made by all, but there is a point when something has to be done with the old District Office, stating that it was not good enough for us, so he does not know why it would be good enough for others. He does not want to not build a school over it, but there comes a time when the District has to do something. Therefore, we need to have more information in order to make a suggestion or recommendation on this concept.

2) Displacement of Myrtle Beach Family Learning Center Tenants during Construction of New Facilities

The new Myrtle Beach Middle school property is the same property as the Myrtle Beach Family Learning Center. At some point, that building will have to be demolished. Some of the programs in that building are District programs and some are community programs. The conversation has arisen that if we have to move the tenants out during the school year, will the District be responsible for finding space, leasing, upfitting, etc. The conversation then arose as to how many of the programs we need to continue to support. Does the Board wish to continue to provide for these programs? A list of the programs that are housed there was provided to Board members. The list has District programs and on the back is non-district programs. This list represents the bare minimum of space that people think they will need for these programs to operate. Mr. Poston stated that for him, this Board is about K-12 education. Mr. James asked that the full Board respond to the question of providing housing for these programs in the interim while the buildings are being built. Mr. DeFeo asked if there had been any conversation with the City of Myrtle Beach about availability on the old Air Force Base. Mr. Wolfe responded that we have looked at many different options, noting that if we rent or lease, we have to upfit, and especially for early childhood ages, this can become very expensive. We are at the point where a decision has to be made with the imminent nature of a new building on the way. If we are going to provide a place, we need time to make arrangements. If we are not going to provide a place, then they need time to make arrangements to relocate. It was suggested that the District determine space and costs involved to share with the Board to then enable the Board to make a decision on the wishes of the Board as relates to being responsible for providing space for the non-District programs. It was also suggested that we look at the possibility of individual programs moving to individual schools that have empty portables that would not have to be relocated, and therefore, would not have to be upfitted. Mr. James asked if it is the belief of this Board that we need to provide space for these agencies. They have their own independent agencies. Mr. DeFeo stated that while these programs are not under Horry County Schools, they do

enhance education and he would like for us to get more information and assist if we can. Mrs. Graham added that she has the same concerns with this issue as the previous discussion, which is that we would be spending money on programs that are not Horry County Schools programs, while we have needs at many of our schools. It was agreed that further information will be gathered and brought directly to the Board for consideration and a decision. Mr. Wolfe stated they will attempt to gather the needed information by the next Board meeting, and if so, Mr. DeFeo asked that this item be placed on the agenda, either in discussion or discussion and business since it has already been discussed.

3) Building Maintenance/Janitorial Services in Summer Months

Ms. Timms shared that she had calls over the summer regarding what happens during the summer months when reconditioning the schools. The concern shared with her is that we have facility supervisors and then others who work under them. The titles may have changed, but it seems there is one person who will ask for volunteers and the volunteers agree to work. Then they will not show up because there is no commitment, and there is not a lot of people who want to work in the summer. There was also a shift in those who take care of ceiling tiles, changing light bulbs, and changing air conditioner filters. At a particular school, there have been problems with getting these items addressed. It seems there are problems with the change that was made in the responsibilities of the janitors. Mr. Brown stated that we will look into this issue and report back at the meeting in October. Dr. Maxey added that he was unaware of particular issues. There has been an adjustment in assignment of light duties. As of our last Principals' Cabinet meeting in September, we received positive feedback about the fact that we are centralized. We will look into that and see what we can do to improve. Ms. Timms added that she knows that many principals do not like this. They want to be able to have control over their building, adding that although there have been a lot of changes, she is not sure that they are good changes. Ms. Morreale noted that there have been issues with getting people to work because some of our schools are on different schedules. Mr. Brown added that although there has been talk of changing schedules, we have not done so as of yet. That is discussion we will have with the Principals' Cabinet in the future. Ms. Morreale stated there are schools that have a hard time getting coverage because of the varying work schedules wherein persons might choose to work at one school and not another because of late work hours versus daytime work hours.

D. Finance

1) Funding – Unspent/Carryover – All Areas

Board Governance states that the Board is supposed to be informed of all unspent monies. Mr. DeFeo does not see a difference in the undesignated reserve and unspent monies. Mr. Gardner read the Policy, which states in part that the Superintendent shall inform the Board of significant transfers of money within funds or other changes substantially affecting the District's financial condition, including an accountability of significant funds that are not spent. We probably need a definition of significant. Each year, we publish the Comprehensive Financial Report that is shared with the Board. If there is anything specific that the Board would like a report on, we will be happy to do so. Mr. Gardner shared that unspent monies roll in to the fund balance each year, with the exception of the capital programs, because those projects can span multiple years. The general fund budgets and the special fund budgets lapse as of June 30 each year, and any money that is there rolls in to the fund balance. Mr. James asked that the Board be given information on any funds remaining in the Phase II, if any, and the Phase III capital projects. Mr. Gardner stated that

this information is shared on each quarterly financial report on the building section under contingency. That is the monies that are unobligated. Mr. Gardner will share that information with the Board at the next Board meeting. Mr. Poston added that the Finance Committee and the Facilities Committee will have a joint meeting soon. At that meeting, they will address trying to bring back to the Board a format that might be more understandable relative to these items.

E. Human Resources

1) At-Will Employment

Mr. James shared his perspective on at-will employment. At his place of employment, there is no post-TERI employment. Mr. James understands that the Board wanted this to be reduced to a nominal number. The Board felt that rehiring TERI employees needed to be based around a unique set of skills or an area where there was difficulty in filling it with new staff. Mr. James shared that we are not forward thinking by saying we want to keep employees for reasons other than as stated. Our justifications need to be more robust. Mr. DeFeo feels there should not be exceptions for any position. Mr. Poston shared a concern that if we are going to have a policy or a practice relative to at-will employees, we have to apply it across this district. Mr. Poston encourages this Board to define its at-will policy, stick with it and hold to it firmly. Mr. DeFeo feels that bringing back an employee on a temporary basis to fill a position is different from rehiring an at-will employee. Mrs. Anderson provided information on the current number of at-will employees. We have employed 81 at-will employees, which is 1.43% of our total workforce. Two years ago we had approximately 120 at-will employees and last year we had approximately 92 at-will employees. Mrs. Anderson asked that as the Board considers the rehiring of at-will employees, they be aware that the teacher pool is shrinking because our educational programs are not producing as many teachers as in the past. In 2017-18, we will have approximately 130 teachers exiting TERI. That only complicates our problem of finding highly qualified teachers. Some of the critical areas are hard to fill. Dr. Maxey added that if the Board determines that there will be zero at-will employees versus nominal at-will employees, then we need to know that is the desire of the Board. Mr. James stated that he feels we need an out due to the comments of Mrs. Anderson. Mr. DeFeo does not think it is right to carve out and allow anyone to return unless specified by an emergency, adding that the Board should decide if they want the number to be zero or nominal. Mr. Garland cautions against making it an absolute zero at-will employment, as it may not serve the District or our students. We have to decide if we would rather have an at-will teacher in a classroom or just have it vacant. Mr. Garland added that this would be a poor and short-sided decision on the part of the Board should there be a teacher vacancy for six months while we try to find a candidate that lives up to our standards. Mr. Garland added that because several people might apply for a job and meet the minimum qualifications does not mean that they meet our standards. Mrs. Todd noted that we might consider rehiring at-will employees at the base salary rather than their most recent salary. Mr. Cox stated that we are having this discussion and our policy currently says nominal. We are currently at nominal. If we are considering a zero policy, but zero is not zero, then why are we having this discussion? Mr. Garland added that with the improvements in the economy and the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in about 10 years, if this trend continues, we will find it more difficult to fill our positions with new employees. Mr. James added that the at-will numbers will continue to decline for several reasons, but the most important being that if you retired prior to December 31, 2012, there was not an earnings cap. If you retire on or after January 1, 2013, there is a \$10,000 earnings cap. Therefore, those who retire by 2018 are not going to come back and jeopardize their retirement. Mr. James stated that he does not necessarily want to close the door at zero, but he does believe

we need to have a more robust justification of having a unique skill set or a position that we could not find a qualified applicant.

3. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Garland and seconded by Mr. James to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The Board Chair did not cast a vote on this item.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Board Meeting – September 28, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rhonda Snowden
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and
Horry County Schools' Board of Education

Approved: _____