



Florence County School District 3

Board Meeting Minutes Location: The Continuum Lecture Room

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Board Chair Jac'Kel Brown called the February 18, 2025 board meeting of the Florence County School District Three Board of Trustees to order.

Declaration of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): 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: Morning News, Lake City Shopper, WBTW, WPDE, & WMBF. This agenda is also posted on the Florence County School District Three website.

Roll Call by Board Secretary: Ms. Rebecca Yates reported that all board members were in attendance.

Moment of Silence: Dr. Hickson requested prayers for all FSD3 students, staff, and families. We observed a moment of silence.

Pledge of Allegiance: Dr. Hickson led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda: Ms. Rutha Frieson made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Mattie Thomas provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve the agenda as presented passed 9-0.

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Ms. Paula Morris made the motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Ms. Julia Mims provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve the consent agenda as presented passed 9-0.

Public Participation: None requested

Board Chair Report: Board Chair Jac'Kel Brown stated they were preparing to attend the SCSBA Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach Thursday thru Sunday. He was asked to serve on a panel of school board members and is happy that our school district will be highlighted. This will be on Thursday. Mr. McKnight, Mr. Locklear and Ms. Frieson will also be there on Thursday. Ms. Rutha Frieson shared details about her visit to Dr. Ronald E. McNair on 1/17/2025. She saw the beautiful new gym and was pleased with all that she saw, during her visit, and was appreciative of her gift basket presented to her and Ms. Campbell sang to her. Ms. Paula Morris went to "Dancing with the Hoopers" fundraiser chaired by Seneca Brown at LCHS and had a fun time watching the show. The cheerleaders and basketball players also danced as entertainment. They are gifted and talented and worked together well. Sr. night basketball game. She was also very pleased to see the surprise guest of Mr. Ronnie Baker, LCHS Coach, in attendance.

Conferences to attend: Let Ms. Yates know and she will convey to Ms. Acuña.

Superintendent's Report: –*Laura Hickson, Superintendent*

Junior Scholar Recognition –*Mary Howard Ed. S., Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Curriculum*

Mr. Ned Blake presented three students, who are "In the Spotlight", with Certificates. Ayden Lee, 8th grade-DREM for becoming a Jr. Scholar for his reading scores in state testing; Miss McKenzie Demery, 6th grade-Olanta Magnet for being a Pee Dee Regional spelling Bee Semifinalist; Mr. Jaccari McCutcheon-Hughes, 6th grade-Scranton Elementary Steam Academy who made it to the 4th round in the Pee Dee Regional spelling Bee. FSD3 is very proud of all of them. All of the slide presentations are posted online.

Instructional Updates–*Mary Howard Ed. S., Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Curriculum*

Ms. Mary presented a list of the upcoming events to mark your calendars. Read Across America Day 3/2-3/6/2025, #SELday 3-3-2025, National History Day Pee Dee Competition 3/4/25 grades 6-12 and 3/11/25 grades 4K-5th, Happy 135th Day of School 3/13/25. Board Chair Jac'Kel Brown also congratulated all the spelling bee winners.

Finance Update – Hope Gibson, Finance Director

February Financials – Ms. Hope reviewed our mission statement and district goals. Ms. Hope presented the January 2025 financial updates. She went through the PowerPoint of the General fund reports, which are posted on our website and is linked to the board agenda online. She reviewed the board approved balance of the general fund budget \$34,142,053. The board approved use of fund balance was \$2,414,000.00 for 24-25 general fund balance, \$1,506,000.00 of the use of fund balance & \$163,891.00 from 23-24 the band instrument, repair & supplies. The board approved general fund is \$38,225,994.00. No questions asked by board. Ms. Hope Gibson continued to go over the dates for next year's General Budget Process. Timeline for 2025-2026 General Fund Budget Process was shared with the board as follows: Thursday, March 20, 2025 1st Reading of PROPOSED Budget; Thursday, April 10, 2025 1st Public Hearing @ 5:00 pm; Thursday, May 15, 2025 2nd Reading; Friday, May 16, 2025 2nd Public Hearing @ 12:00 pm; Thursday, June 19, 2025 FINAL Reading. Ms. Julia Mims made the motion to approve the Timeline for 2025-2025 Budget Approval as presented and Mr. Jason Kirby provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve the consent agenda as presented passed 9-0.

Human Resources Updates: – Angelia Scott, Director of Human Resources

Ms. Scott thanked everyone who participated and helped in the 2025 recruitment fair. She shared the positive results from the teacher recruitment fair on Saturday February 1, 2025 at the Continuum. They had a good turnout and all FSD3 schools had their stations looking very welcoming, greeting, answering questions and interviewing as well. They also did do something a little different this year was invited student teachers from the local universities. What they found is where the individuals do their student teaching, they generally they want to get a job. They had future teachers out there working with them. No questions from the board.

Other Legislative and District Updates – Dr. Laura Hickson, Superintendent

Dr. Hickson acknowledged the success of "Dancing with the Hoopers" and the ceremony for the first "Pinning of Certified CNA" students. She asked Mr. Burgess to stand and be recognized for working with our health science teachers to get our high school certified and we are now a certified site where they can take everything there at the high school and get fully certified to be CNA's. Dr. Hickson spoke at the nursing home where our five students did their field experience. She learned that the patience were asking for the girls who were going there from the CNA program. They truly enjoy the students being there. In legislative updates, Dr. Hickson presented the legislators proposed bill to ban DEI-Based preferences. Schools must use sex and race neutral hiring practices. They cannot give special treatment to anyone due to race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. This bill will be tied to funding. They are putting into place that if district do not abide by the law, it could impact their funding. It will be coming. We will hear more later, she did send a text to representative Kirby to invite him to FSD# to give us some updates. Possibly attend our March meeting. Dr. Hickson also brought a request to the board in regards to our financial auditors, Mauldin and Jenkins, CPA's & Advisors. The request is to grant permission to extend our contract with Mauldin and Jenkins, CPA's & Advisors that ended in December 2024 to extend (2 years) to December 2026 to give time to search for future CPA's and Advisors. Ms. Rutha Frieson made the motion to approve giving permission to extend the contract with Mauldin and Jenkins, CPA's & Advisors that ended in December

2024 to extend (2 years) to end on December 2026 as presented and Ms. Rebecca Yates provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve the consent agenda as presented passed 9-0. Progress on District Upgrades –Florence 3.0 were also given to the board. Phase 1A focusing on Lake City Early Childhood Center of the Art was completed in December 2024. Very pleased with completion. Shared copies of pictures on completions. Phase 1B will focus on Lake City Early Childhood as well. Phase 2 also reviewed with board, especially on the HVAC situation. On the meeting on February 26th, they look at what to work on next. The DREM and JPT gyms are almost complete. They need curtains, wall graphics and wall padding to be 100% complete. All updates and upcoming work was part of slide presentation, which is also available online. Soon the invitation will come to go see the schools and their completion. She also announced that the girl's and the boy's basketball teams from DREM have won the championship. Conference information for the upcoming conference is in the folder at their seat. Any questions please ask her.

Enter into Executive Session – Ms. Julia Mims made the motion to exit regular session to go into executive session to discuss student discipline or potential legal matters, and personnel matters (possible hiring, termination, resignation, placed on leave or potential legal matters) and Superintendent's Evaluation Ms. Rutha Frieson provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to enter executive session passed 9-0.

Exit Executive Session – Ms. Paula Morris made the motion to exit executive session and enter public session. Ms. Julia Mims provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to exit the executive session and enter back into public session passed 9-0.

PUBLIC SESSION

Action from executive session – Board Chair Jac'Kel Brown shared the results of the Superintendent's Evaluation. The overall evaluation for Dr. Laura Hickson on behalf of the Florence County School District 3 Board of Trustees is met is her overall rating for her evaluation. He thanked Dr. Hickson for all continued effort to ensure that our students are college or career ready and are responsible members of society. Thanked her for all that she leads her team to do and the work that she provides in our community to make sure our students are successful. On behalf of all the school board, he thanked her for all her continued work. He then entertained a motion for Dr. Hickson's evaluations increase of 2% of the base salary. There was the action to vote on during executive session on the Superintendent's Evaluation. Ms. Rutha Frieson made the motion to increase Dr. Hickson's salary by 2% to the base. Mr. Jason Kirby provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to increase her salary by 2% to the base passed 9-0 and motion carries.

Adjourn: There being no further business for the Board of Trustees; Ms. Julia Mims made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Paula Morris provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to adjourn passed 9-0.

Date approved

Jac'Kel Brown, Chair

Liz Acuña, Recording Clerk

Rebecca Yates, Secretary