



# Florence County School District 3

*Board Meeting*

*Minutes*

*Location: Zoom*

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**Thursday, January 21, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**

**In Attendance:** Barbara Bryant, Julia Mims, Almeta Fleming, Rutha Frieson, Mattie Thomas, Jason Kirby, Gloria Robinson, and Jac'Kel Brown. Mattie Thomas entered the meeting after approval of the agenda.

**Absent:** Paula Morris

**Call to Order:** Board Chair, Barbara Bryant called the January 21, 2021 called board meeting of the Florence County School District Three Board of Trustees to order. 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. A moment of silence was observed after which Chair Bryant led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Rutha Frieson made the motion to approve tonight's agenda as presented. Gloria Robinson provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve tonight's agenda as presented passed 7-0.

**Note:** *Mattie Thomas entered the meeting at this time.*

**Executive Session:** Almeta Fleming made the motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel regarding hiring, termination, resignation, or potential legal matters, and to discuss the Superintendent's contract. Rutha Frieson provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to enter into executive session passed 8-0.

**Exit Executive Session** –Julia Mims made the motion to exit executive session. Jason Kirby provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to exit executive session passed 8-0.

## **PUBLIC SESSION**

### **Action taken from Executive Session**

Almeta Fleming made the motion to extend Superintendent Laura Hickson's contract term through June 30, 2024. Julia Mims provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to extend Superintendent Laura Hickson's contract term through June 30, 2024 passed 8-0.

Barbara Bryant stated that the FSD3 Board of Trustees is very happy with the progress Ms. Hickson has made for the district. She always has 'children first' on her agenda and FSD3 is very lucky to have her as Superintendent.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda:** Julia Mims made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Gloria Robinson provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve the 1/21/2021 consent agenda as presented passed 8-0. This consent agenda contained the following items: Minutes from the December 17, 2020 board meeting, minutes from the January 13, 2021 called board meeting, and the Certified Personnel Report.

**Swearing in of elected board members:** Shelia Knotts, Notary Public commissioned by the State of SC administered the Oath of Office to the following November 3, 2020 elected board members:

Gloria Robinson – District 2

Rutha Frieson – District 4A

Julia Mims – District 5

Barbara Bryant – District 7A

**Election of Officers:** Superintendent Laura Hickson opened the floor for nominations for the FSD3 Board Chair. Julia Mims nominated Barbara Bryant for FSD3 Board Chair. With no further nominations, Superintendent Hickson closed the floor for nominations for FSD3 Board Chair. Rutha Frieson provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion to elect Barbara Bryant for FSD3 Board Chair. A roll call vote of yes or no for Barbara Bryant to be elected as the FSD3 Board Chair: Barbara Bryant-YES; Julia Mims-YES; Gloria Robinson-YES; Jason Kirby-YES; Almeta Fleming-YES; Jac'Kel Brown-YES; Rutha Frieson-YES; Mattie Thomas-YES. The motion to elect Barbara Bryant as FSD3 Board Chair passed 8-0.

Board Chair Barbara Bryant continued with the election of officers:

Chair Bryant opened the floor for FSD3 Vice-Chair. Mattie Thomas nominated Jac'Kel Brown for FSD3 Vice-Chair. Rutha Frieson nominated Julia Mims for FSD3 Vice-Chair. With no further nominations, Chair Bryant closed the floor for nominations for FSD3 Vice-Chair. Almeta Fleming provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for the motion to elect Jac'Kel Brown as FSD3 Vice-Chair. A roll call vote of yes or no for Jac'Kel Brown to be elected as the FSD3 Vice-Chair: Barbara Bryant-NO; Julia Mims-NO; Gloria Robinson-NO; Jason Kirby-NO; Almeta Fleming-YES; Jac'Kel Brown-YES; Rutha Frieson-NO; Mattie Thomas-YES. The motion to elect Jac'Kel Brown as FSD3 Vice-Chair failed 3-5. Julia Mims was elected as the FSD3 Vice-Chair 5-3.

Chair Bryant opened the floor for FSD3 Secretary. Julia Mims nominated Jac'Kel Brown for FSD3 Board Secretary. With no further nominations, Chair Bryant closed the floor for nominations for FSD3 Board Secretary. Gloria Robinson provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for the motion to elect Jac'Kel Brown for FSD3 Board Secretary. A roll call vote of yes or no for Jac'Kel Brown to be elected as the FSD3 Board Secretary: Barbara Bryant-YES; Julia Mims-YES; Gloria Robinson-YES; Jason Kirby-YES; Almeta Fleming-YES; Jac'Kel Brown-YES; Rutha Frieson-YES; Mattie Thomas-YES. The motion to elect Jac'Kel Brown as FSD3 Board Secretary passed 8-0.

**Temporary Suspension of Public Participation (Policy BCBI):** Rutha Frieson made the motion to temporarily suspend Policy BCBI (Public Participation). Almeta Fleming provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. The motion to temporarily suspend Policy BCBI (Public Participation) passed 8-0.

**Special Recognition-SCSBA 10 years of service board trustee-Barbara Bryant:** Barbara Bryant, a board of trustees member for Florence School District 3, has been recognized by the South Carolina School Boards Association for 10 years of school board service.

This year, 31 school board members from across South Carolina will receive special lapel pins for reaching the 10- or 15-year benchmark.

Veteran school board members provide vision and valuable leadership for school districts. SCSBA and the local boards are happy to honor these board members for their long-term dedication to improving student achievement in their communities.

In January 2021, in South Carolina, about 47 percent of the state's approximately 650 school district and affiliate board members had served four years or less, and about 30 percent had 10 years or more of board service.

SCSBA is a non-profit organization serving as a source of information and a statewide voice for boards governing the 79 school districts.

### **Board Chair Report**

1. *Report of Any Meetings/Schools Attended* – With January being board member appreciation month, each school was designated a board member to show how appreciative FSD3 is for our board trustees service to the community and this school district.  
Barbara Bryant will be visiting the Panther Academy site next week.  
Almeta Fleming visited Lake City Early Childhood Education. She was impressed by the updated technology and PPE safety measures (plexiglass and distancing of desks in classrooms specifically) within the school.  
Gloria Robinson visited Ronald E. McNair Junior High School where she was greeted by Principal Terrell Fleming, Assistant Principal Al Calcutt, and Assistant Principal Susan Anderson. Mrs. Robinson expressed her amazement of the upgrades to this school. To the point, she did not recognize it. Mrs. Robinson had a wonderful conversation with the REMJH administrators about F2F and virtual instruction and how it is impacting REMJH students.  
Jac'kel Brown will be visiting Olanta Elementary Magnet School next week.  
Ruth Frieson will be visiting Lake City High School next week.  
Jason Kirby participated in a virtual program, which included student presentations, with Main Street Elementary School. Mr. Kirby was very impressed with the awesome job teachers and students are doing at this school.  
Mattie Thomas visited J. Paul Truluck Magnet School this past Wednesday.  
Julia Mims will be visiting J. C. Lynch Elementary School next week.  
Scranton Elementary STEAM Academy connected Paula Morris to set up a time to meet.

2. *Request to Attend Any Meetings – None.*

**Staff Reports**

**Finance Update** – *Michelle Humphrey, Finance Director*

The December financials are linked to your board agenda and on the FSD3 website. Our current budget remains at \$30,162,700, which includes the \$200,000 board approved use of fund balance for facility safety improvement measures and the board approved Christmas Bonus for FT/PT employees. Mrs. Humphrey's presentation included a comparison of the General Budget of SY 19-20 and FY 20-21 based on the FY 19-20 revenues.

**Instructional Update** – *Allana Prosser, Ed. S., Chief Academic Officer*

*Closing the Gap* - FSD3 currently has a team of district and school leaders working on a 3-year plan to close the achievement gap. The first meeting was held on 1/20/2021. The purpose of the team is to create a plan that not only includes learning, but also social/emotional healing in both face to face and virtual settings in an effort to close the achievement gap created during the pandemic. The team was tasked with beginning research on assessments for placement, curriculum, interventions, and other steps that have proven to work if implemented with fidelity. The team will preview research based options and opportunities to determine the best plan of action for the students of FSD3. The team will continue to meet weekly through the month of February to have a plan in place for review so that this process can begin in April.

**Operations Update** – *Kasey Feagin, Ed. S., Chief Operations Officer*

*COVID-19 Cases since January 1* – Mrs. Feagin shared with board members and those present for this board meeting, the current # of reported COVID-19 positive cases and the # of persons quarantined due to exposure in FSD3. The combined #s were 43 district of school staff and 89 students.

*Feedback from IKA policy Administrative Rule* – A committee met prior to the December Board meeting to discuss the administrative rule for Policy IKA, Assessments and Grading. The finalized administrative rule was then sent out to stakeholders for feedback. Feedback requested was a simple, I agree with the above Administrative Rule as it is written with a box provided for any comments. Presently, approximately 82% responded Yes (in agreement) with approximately 16% responding No (not in agreement). This survey remains open on the FSD3 Facebook page.

**Superintendent's Report** – *Laura Hickson, Ed. S., Superintendent*

**Legislative Updates** – The SC House of Representatives Education Subcommittee is scheduled to take action on Bill H.3618 which requires students to be administered in-person high stakes standardized tests this school year. This bill directs that test score results by grade level and student subgroups would be published on school report cards by October 1, but suspends school and district performance ratings. Due to the impact COVID has on teaching and learning, we are not supporting this bill. SC State Superintendent of Education, Molly Spearman, in November requested a waiver from standardized testing from the U. S. Department of Education but has not received a response.

**Return to F2F Learning Plans** – Students will return to F2F instruction for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester on Monday, February 1. Parents who selected 1005 Virtual will continue working virtually as 2<sup>nd</sup> semester begins. Ms. Hickson asked for action to be taken by the board to request permission to have student-athletes

who are participating in winter sports return at least one week before the February 1<sup>st</sup> F2F date, for closed conditioning/non-contact practice. February 1<sup>st</sup> is the time for basketball playoff games to begin. It would benefit students if they could practice at least one week before returning on the F2F date. Rutha Frieson made the motion to allow student-athletes of FSD3 to return to a closed conditioning/non-contact practice the week before the February 1<sup>st</sup> F2F instruction. Julia Mims provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. A roll-call vote was taken as follows: Gloria Robinson–Yes; Mattie Thomas–Yes; Jason Kirby-Yes; Rutha Frieson-Yes; Julia Mims-Yes; Almeta Fleming-Yes; Jac’kel Brown-Yes; Barbara Bryant-Yes. The motion to allow student-athletes of FSD3 to return to a closed conditioning/non-contact practice the week before the February 1<sup>st</sup> F2F instruction passed 8-0.

**Adjourn:** There being no further business for the Board of Trustees; Gloria Robinson made the motion to adjourn. Julia Mims provided the 2<sup>nd</sup> for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to adjourn passed 8-0.

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Date approved

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Barbara Bryant, Chair

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Shelia Knotts, Recording Clerk

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Jac’Kel Brown, Secretary