



Florence County School District 3

Board Meeting Minutes Location: Board Room

Thursday, May 8, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Board Chair Jac'Kel Brown called the April 10, 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. Paula Morris 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. Rebecca Yates made the motion to approve the consent 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 consent agenda as presented passed 9-0.

Public Participation: Rochelle Jones presenting LCHS Alumni to invite the board members to the Gala on July 26, 2025. She also thanked Dr. Hickson for all your support to their organization. 2nd speaker was Aiden Bright who was representing Leading with Purpose Scholarship. He is a Lake City High School recent graduate and was sharing with the board members and community about the scholarship and how it works and accepts donations. The scholarship program will help other college bound students with mentorship, general support and with financial scholarships.

Board Chair Report: Board Chair Jac'Kel Brown started with thanking all the Florence School District board members, Dr. Hickson, principals and coaches and all the staff that gave him and his family support during a rough week and rough transition period. He appreciated everyone. Ms. Paula Morris wanted to thank Dr. Hickson for all her support, dedication and hard work that she gave to FSD3. She shared stories of the different ways that Dr. Hickson accomplished so much to improve our district. Through her advice, bonuses and financial incentives to our employees, working hard for every single child to do well and never giving up on any of them, attending every function and even the district had, taking a budget in the red to have a budget with surplus, making sure safety of our students and staff was a priority, and the over-all impact that Dr. Hickson has/had on students and employees of FSD3 we are truly grateful. She thanked Dr. Hickson for your legacy. The long-lasting impact of your

support and actions that she did for FSD3 while she is/was our superintendent and leader.

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

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

Dr. Hickson recognized students and staff members for their hard work and achievements. Dr. Hickson started with the students who will graduate with not only their diplomas but also earned degrees and/or professional career certificates. This year has the highest amount of students to graduate with 23 students from both LCHS and JP Truluck, since the Florence Darlington Tech College program started in 2016. Dr. Hickson also recognized the Varsity Girls Basketball Region 7-AA Champions, Middle School Boys Basketball Big South Athletic Champions, Middle School Girls Basketball Big South Athletic Champions, Middle School Girls Cheerleading, Boy's Wrestling 4 Time Region Champions, and the Boys & Girls Track & Field Region 7-AA Champions.

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

Ms. Mary Howard greeted everyone and let them know that this week we have been celebrating teacher appreciation, principal appreciation and nurse's week. She then gave the floor to Ms. Tonyelle Thomas to share the Fine Arts Department Updates. Ms. Tonyelle shared with the board members the focuses for the Arts. To increase academic achievement in the Arts, support inclusion of students by partnering with Polyphony Music Therapy, and provide artists-in-residence opportunities for schools. It also provided professional development opportunities, provided materials to show casework, and provide materials and equipment for arts-based instruction for each teacher. More accomplishments are the JPT's Theater Department produced Seussical, Jr., they had several community performances for JPT's Dance Troupe, several community performances by LCHS's Blue Guard Marching Band, JPT's Chorus earned an "Excellent" rating at the Festival of Music, and five entries made Artfields, Jr. this year. There are grant opportunities such as being the proud recipient of 3 grants and other mini-grants. Other upcoming grant applications are being submitted as well. Ms. Tonyelle gave an update on summer camp also. We have 350 registered for summer camp. Summer camp is from May 28th through June 13th, 2025. Other upcoming events were shared. May 22nd –JPT Graduation 6pm, May 23rd – Early Dismissal; Last Day of School K-8 Report Cards issued; LCHS Graduation 7pm; May 26th – Memorial Day (district closed), May 28th – June 13th – Summer Learning Camps.

Dr. Yvonne Commodore read the FSD3 Policy Section K 2nd Reading of new policies, recommendations and submitted for board approval.

****Section K New Policies 2nd Reading** of KBB, KC, KDCB, KDD, KEC, KFA, & KFD – Ms. Ruth Frieson made the motion to approve the 2nd reading of policies KBB, KC, KDCB, KDD, KEC, KFA, & KFD as presented. Ms. Rebecca Yates provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve passes 9-0.

Mr. Brian Huckabee read the FSD3 Policy Section L – Section L New Policies LBA & LH recommendation and submitted for board approval.

****Section L New Policies LBA & LH 2nd Reading** - Ms. Rebecca Yates made the motion to approve the recommendation of policies LBA & LH 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 passes 9-0.

Finance Update – Hope Gibson, Finance Director

May 2025 Finance Updates. Ms. Hope reviewed our mission statement and district goals. Ms. Hope presented the April 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 for fy 24-25 & \$163,891.00 for fy 23-24 the band instrument, repair & supplies. The board approved general fund is \$38,225,944.00. No questions asked by board. Ms. Hope Gibson continued to go over the dates for 2025-2026 school year's General Budget Approval Process. The 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.

Preliminary Second Reading of General Fund Budget Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Ms.

Hope reviewed our mission statement and district goals. Slide presentation of the 135 average daily membership trend. Ask the board to focus on the 2025-2026 on bottom of page. Projected is a decrease of 159.14. Education funding reform: aid to classrooms program – proposed in FY 25-26 Executive Budget slides, pages 5 & 6, were read aloud. Local Tax projections by millage, was also read aloud. Millage history for operations graph from 19-20 through 25-26 presented. Next slide was of millage levy fy 2024-2025 chart showing Florence School District 3 is the lowest of all Florence school districts. Going on to next slide showing the method used to calculate local taxes for school district with examples from home fair market values. The next 4 pages of Preliminary General Fund Budget for FY 2025-2026. Started with projections of revenues. The final slide was the 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. This completed her presentation of the first reading of the Preliminary of the General Fund Budget for FY 2025-2026. No questions asked. Ms. Rebecca Yates made a motion to accept the Preliminary Second Reading of General Fund Budget Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Ms. Paula Morris provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to passed 9-0.

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

Ms. Scott began her presentation with the Future Teacher College Signing Day update. They had 3 for Francis Marion University, 1 for USC, and 1 for Voorhees College. They will be supported and inspired throughout their continued education while getting their teaching credentials and hopefully return to FSD3 to teach. We are also want to celebrate those who have been with us. She reviewed the certified vacancies-tentative for 2025-2026. All contract are due May 10th, so we will know after that date.

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

Dr. Hickson shared the legislative updates. A lot of concerns about funding formula. The new funding formula for public and private schools/charter schools will change and this is a huge hit to public schools. Paid parental leave may move from 6 to 12 weeks. **This will** hit our finance department hard. Scranton Elementary has been nominated as one of the top 5 schools. Mental Health Grant was retracted/non-

continuation of the grant by US Department of Education. Dr. Hickson has started to write letters to the appropriate leaders to appeal. She also read the some of the letter from the US Government. Dr. Hickson shared the \$10,000.00 from a shared/matching grant from Santee Electric Coop and Cobank to purchase Stop the Bleed instructor supplies and new AED's.

FDTC's graduation is Thursday May 15, 2025. We have 23 seniors who will receive there dual enrollment degrees and career certifications. The bond process is complete. Dr. Hickson handed out binders to each board member with 12 tabs marked of all the upgrades done and to be done in FSD3. Before reviewing the binders, Dr. Hickson asked Mr. Jordan Boyle, a leader for Lighthouse Team and other organizations from LCHS, to speak regarding his role in leadership and what he would like to see for the future for our students and himself in leading and improving our district. Dr. Hickson then returned to go over the details of the binders. They also included details of the bond and financing specifics for the upgrades. She explained each tab point by point to allow the board to understand where she left off with the Bond funding and FSD3 upgrade costs. FSD3 can continue to move forward with the approved improvements. The upgrades focus on three areas. Academics, Arts and Athletics. No questions regarding the tabs in the notebook/binder. Moving on, Dr. Hickson submitted the Board Meeting Dates for SY 2025-2026 to the board for approval. Ms. Paula Morris made the motion to accept the Board Meeting Dates for SY 2025-2026 as presented and Ms. Mattie Thomas provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve passes 9-0.

A request to purchase a district van was presented to the board members. In July 2023 the accident that totaled the mini-bus. Thankfully, no fatalities and Coach Baker is doing better. Transportation suggested that we get a van instead of another bus. Insurance did pay for the totaled bus \$74,117.00. She made 5 points for rationale as to why the district needs the van. The new district van will be able to transport up to 9 at a time. Ms. Mattie Thomas made the motion to purchase a district van as presented and Ms. Rutha Frieson s provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of this motion. The motion to approve passes 9-0.

And last but not least, this is Dr. Hickson's last board meeting. She handed out a 2 page "Celebrating You" Thank you for your support". It is a "Message to Students, Parents, Staff, Community Members & Stakeholders" letter from herself. She read it aloud.

Exit into Executive Session – Ms. Paula Morris made the motion to exit open 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. 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 out of Executive Session and Reconvene to Open Session – Ms. Rutha Frieson made the motion to exit executive session and reconvene to open session. Ms. Paula Morris provided the 2nd for this motion. All board members present voted in favor of

this motion. The motion to exit executive session and reconvene to open session passed 9-0.

PUBLIC SESSION

Action from executive session – None

Adjourn: There being no further business for the Board of Trustees; Ms. Rutha Frieson 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