

CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 12, 2009

The Cherokee County School District No. 1 Board of Trustees met in regular session on Monday, October 12, 2009 at 7:00 PM in the Board Room at the District Administrative Office. Board members present were Chair Mr. Billy Blackwell, Vice Chair Mr. Donnie Lee Smith, Secretary Mrs. Amanda Knowles, Mrs. Lindley H. Auton, Mr. Barry E. Bailey, Mr. Willie J. Crosby, Mr. Mike A. Ellis, Mrs. Robin D. Harper, and Ms. Cheryll D. Smith. Administrators present were Superintendent Dr. William B. James, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction Dr. Linda C. Sellars, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Mr. William A. Jones, Director of Educational Programs Mrs. Page McCraw, and Director of Finance Mr. Ben Childs. News media present were Mr. Scott Powell - Gaffney Ledger and Mrs. Janet Spencer – Spartanburg Herald-Journal.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 30-40-80(d), as amended, the following have been notified of the time, date, and agenda of this meeting: The Blacksburg Times, The Cherokee Chronicle, The Gaffney Ledger, the Shelby Star, the Spartanburg Herald-Journal, Radio Stations WEAC-AM and WFGN, WSPA-TV, WYFF-TV, and WSOC-TV.

Chair Mr. Billy Blackwell called the meeting to order at 7:50 PM and recognized the news media present. Mr. Smith led in the opening prayer. The Gaffney High School AFJROTC made the presentation of colors.

Approval of the Board Agenda was the next item on the agenda. **Mrs. Knowles made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Smith. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

Regular Board Minutes dated September 14, 2009 were presented for approval. **Mr. Smith made the motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Mrs. Harper. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

School Board Policy BCBI - Public Participation was the next item on the agenda. No one requested to address trustees according to policy.

Report from Special Needs Committee was the next item on the agenda. Mrs. Lindley Auton, Chair of the Special Needs Committee provided a report from the committee meetings on Monday, October 5, 2009 and Wednesday, October 7, 2009. There was lengthy discussion regarding the agenda items addressed by the committee as well as the time frame for the committee meetings. The committee discussed the Head Start Program Grant Proposal and received a copy of the project summary, a copy of building layout, & programs currently housed

at the Cherokee Community Learning Center. The Early Head Start Program grant proposal will fund four infant/toddler classrooms for a total of 32 students, one 3K/4K classroom for twenty students, and one Parent Educator to provide home-based services to 12 families. The total programmatic funding is \$536,000. Additional start-up funding of approximately \$430,000 will provide transportation services, custodial services, building renovations (additional egress, bathrooms, & conversion of office for kitchenette), and state-of-the-art playground equipment. The new hires for the program would be hired and employed by Head Start, not the school district. The district will contribute in-kind services for the program including the building, utilities, some kindergarten furniture not being used in the district at this time, and reimbursable food services. No current programs would be displaced or discontinued at the learning center and no district employee currently employed in these similar programs at the center would lose his/her current position with the district. The grant period is for 3 years with annual renewals. The agreement could be terminated between Head Start and the school district under terms agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding or building usage agreement. After visiting the facility and reviewing the current programs and layout of the building, **the committee recommended not accepting the grant proposal and advising Head Start to look for another location. Mr. Blackwell called for a vote on the committee's recommendation. The following trustees voted in favor of the recommendation: Mrs. Auton, Mr. Bailey, Mrs. Knowles, Mr. Blackwell, Mr. Smith, Mr. Ellis, Mrs. Harper, and Ms. Smith. The following trustee voted in opposition to the recommendation: Mr. Crosby. The committee recommendation passed due to a majority vote.**

The next item discussed by the committee was Request to Name Gymnasium at Ewing Middle School Dr. Denise Wooten and the faculty at Ewing Middle School requested to name the gymnasium in honor of former Assistant Principal Mr. Tim Phillips and place a bronze plaque on the wall. All expenses incurred to purchase the plaque would be absorbed by the school. **The committee recommended upholding current policy for naming of facilities and to revisit this request in 2 years as defined by policy. This item was received for information only; no action was required.**

School Board Policy BCBI – Public Participation was the next item discussed by the committee. The current policy states in part that individuals or groups wanting to appear before the board will notify the chairperson and superintendent in writing at least 48 hours before the meeting and presentation of the matter will not exceed 10 minutes. A draft copy of the revised policy was sent to trustees on Friday and included key points of the proposed revision. The intent is to reduce the timeframe for a request to appear before the board, have an appropriate form easily available, and allow timely opportunity for constituents to address the board regarding district and/or school related matters in an appropriate venue. **The committee recommended revising the policy as presented. Mr. Blackwell called for a vote on the committee's recommendation. All trustees voted unanimously for the recommendation.**

The next item discussed by the committee was School Board Policy JCDB – Dress Code. Trustees have received calls about the sloppy and provocative dress of some district employees. While there is a dress code policy for students, there is not an existing policy regarding the dress of employees, including certified and classified staff, in the district. The committee recommended this item be tabled **pending input from the Superintendent's Advisory**

Committee of teachers and administration. This item was received for information only; no action was required.

School Board Policy GAMAA – Staff Rights & Responsibilities (Tobacco Free Environment) was the next item on the committee’s agenda. Trustees have received reports of people smoking or dipping on the job and/or in district vehicles. Complaints have been received from non-smokers who resent the frequent “smoke breaks” but are afraid to say anything since they work with these individuals. The committee discussed whether or not the above policy was being enforced and if it was being enforced consistently throughout the district. The administration assured the committee the policy would be addressed to individuals who are not adhering to policy. **This item was received for information only; no action was required.**

The next item discussed by the committee was School Board Policy GAE – Complaints & Grievances. The committee discussed the process should an employee have a dispute with his/her immediate supervisor, due process should the individual appeal to the board, & bullying & harassment and were advised that an employee should go to the Director of Personnel with the grievance should it involve an immediate supervisor. **The committee recommended that the full board be notified of a request for an appeal before the board prior to a decision being made on whether or not the appeal will be heard. Mr. Blackwell called for a vote on the committee’s recommendation. All trustees voted unanimously for the recommendation.**

School Board Policy IDF – Interscholastic Activities & Athletics – “C” Average was the next item on the committee’s agenda. Trustees have received calls regarding student athletes who have not maintained the “C” average and asked how the policy was being monitored. A tutorial class is conducted each Tuesday and Thursday for student athletes who are not maintaining a “C” average. Coaches monitor tutorial class attendance and impose penalties (running) or not allowing students to participate in games if they do not attend the classes on a regular basis. Committee members discussed the importance of monitoring the tutorial program, and requested that the program be monitored at the middle school level as well. **This item was received for information only; no action was required.**

The next item discussed by the committee was School Board Policy JC – Students Rights & Responsibilities. The committee discussed how bullying and harassment were addressed for both students and employees. The above referenced policy is in compliance with State and Federal guidelines. The district has a policy in effect for bullying and/or harassment of district personnel. Any specific circumstances or situations should be referred to the superintendent for investigation. **This item was received for information only; no action was required.**

The final item discussed by the committee was School Board Policy GBI – Evaluation of Professional Personnel. The committee was advised of the process for reprimand of professional personnel. The process is verbal, written, and recommendation up to and including termination. A verbal reprimand is the initial avenue to correct the behavior, circumstance, or situation. The next step is a written reprimand and it becomes a permanent part of an individual’s personnel file. The administration asked for specifics on this item if committee members had concerns on any employee(s) in the district. **This item was received for information only; no action was required.** This concluded the report from the committee.

Delegates to Delegate Assembly – The South Carolina School Boards Association will host the annual Legislative & Advocacy Conference & Delegate Assembly at the Crowne Plaza Resort at Hilton Head on December 4-6, 2009. The district has three voting delegate privileges. Mr. Blackwell asked Ms. Cheryll Smith to represent the Board and to have three (3) votes. **This item was received for information only; no action was required.**

Executive Session – Contractual Matter was the next item on the agenda. Mr. Blackwell called for a motion to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter regarding a certified employee in the district. **Mr. Crosby made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Auton. All trustees voted unanimously to go into executive session.** The executive session began at 8:21 PM and ended at 8:57 PM. Mr. Blackwell said the board had been in executive session to discuss a personnel matter regarding a certified employee in the district and called for a motion to return to regular session. **Mrs. Knowles made the motion to return to regular session, seconded by Mrs. Auton. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion. This item was received for information only; no action was taken.**

The next item on the agenda was Curriculum and Instruction Update. An overview of the Graduate Assistance Program will be provided at the board meeting in November. **This item was presented for information only; no action was required.**

The next item on the agenda was Administrative Services Update. Director of Finance Mr. Ben Childs presented the Monthly Financial Update. The General Fund has received 7% of the budgeted revenue for 2009. The General Fund has expended 8% of the budgeted expenditures. The ending fund balance as of August 31, 2009 is \$4,002,687. This figure includes year-to-date revenue, transfers from State/Federal funds less year-to-date expenditures and transfers to other programs. The preliminary projected fund balance as of June 30, 2010 is \$4,703,134. A total of \$47,343,459 has been received in one-cent sales tax revenue through August 2009. A total of \$37,030,344 has been paid as principal and interest on bond indebtedness through this same period. The Food Service budget had a positive ending cash balance of \$61,975 as of August 31, 2009. The report also included budgeted expenditures, encumbrances, and remaining balances on building projects by location. There is only one outstanding issue with Johnson Controls on the Ninth Grade Academy at Gaffney High School. All other building projects are closed out.

Dr. James advised trustees that the administration has already begun budget preparation for the 2010-2011 budget and has looked at long-range forecasts. It will be some time before information is received on base student cost. The district will be able to add \$950,000 to fund balance to offset stimulus monies based on higher collections than anticipated and watchful spending this year. The administration received information of a potential charter school that may be organized in Cherokee County. Charter schools are funded at a significantly higher rate than public schools, which may adversely affect the budget. **This item was received for information only; no action was required.**

Ratification of Claims was the next item on the agenda. **Mr. Crosby made the motion to approve claims, seconded by Mr. Smith. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

The next item on the agenda was Maintenance Update. The administration has been working with the general contractor to repair all the leaks at the field house in Blacksburg. The contractor will be responsible to pay for any work that is required to eliminate the leaks. Sossamon Construction Company has submitted a letter confirming the contractor will replace the gutters at Cherokee Community Learning Center. The parking area at the center is muddy due to the runoff from the surrounding hillside. The general contractor for the Gaffney High School Stadium has been paid for pay applications submitted and it would be his responsibility to pay any subcontractors. The district cannot legally force the general contractor to pay subcontractors. Mr. Smith asked that the number of cafeteria employees be revisited as soon as the budget improved and to ensure students were being fed. **This item was received for information only; no action was taken.**

Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Mr. William A. Jones presented Personnel Matters for consideration. **Mrs. Auton made the motion to approve personnel matters, seconded by Mr. Smith. All trustees voted unanimously for personnel matters as presented.**

The next item on the agenda was announcements. Dr. James reminded trustees of upcoming events. The next scheduled board meeting is Monday, November 9, 2009.

Other Matters

Ms. Smith commended personnel for their hard work and efforts for students.

Mrs. Harper thanked everyone for welcoming her during the learning process. She thanked everyone for their patience since the meeting was very long. She visited BD Lee and was very impressed with the school.

Mr. Ellis expressed appreciation for what employees do for the kids.

Mr. Smith had no comments for other matters.

Mrs. Knowles had no comments.

Mr. Crosby had no comments.

Mrs. Auton said the Special Needs Committee wanted to address long standing concerns that have been brought to the forefront. She asked what time Wednesday practice sessions ended. Dr. James said the administration does not tell coaches when to practice or not to practice. The issue of separation of church and state would be raised if the district mandated a specific time to practice on Wednesdays. There is no district-wide policy on rolling book bags; some schools allow and some schools do not allow students to have rolling book bags. Trustees received a copy of the start and end time for schools and employees, which will be published on the district's web site. The former School Resource Officer at the learning center was funded by a grant and the position was not replaced when the grant expired. SRO's from other schools will routinely visit the learning center and the drug dog will periodically be taken to the school. The *Alive at 25 Program* is underway at both high schools and hopefully will encourage defensive

driving and increase awareness of young drivers in an effort to save lives. Mrs. Auton thanked everyone for participating in the Fowlkes homecoming, asked that the family be remembered in prayer, and encouraged support of our troops and veterans.

Mr. Blackwell stated he was trying to be fair in referring issues to committee and if anyone had a specific issue or concern to be addressed he would refer it to the appropriate committee. All trustees can and should ask for information and attend committee meetings if possible.

Mr. Blackwell called for a motion to adjourn. **Mrs. Auton made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Harper. All trustees voted unanimously to adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 9:23 PM.

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