

**CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BOARD MEETING**

January 9, 2023

The Cherokee County School District Board of Trustees met in session on Monday, January 9, 2023, at 6:00 PM in the District Office Boardroom. Board members present were Chair Dr. Mark Nix, Vice Chair Ms. Shanese Dawkins, Mr. Billy Blackwell, Mr. Johnny Sarratt, Mr. Cody Cash, Mrs. Carol Gallman, Mrs. Lynne Shackelford, Mrs. Crystal Shippy, and Mr. Peter Wilkins. Administrators present were Superintendent Dr. Dana Fall, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Carl Carpenter, Executive Director of Finance Mrs. Sherri Morgan, Executive Director of Academics Dr. Meredith Rose, Executive Director of Student Services Mrs. Bessie D. Westmoreland and Executive Director of Operations Mr. Todd Hughes. Media Present: Mr. Scott Powell from *The Gaffney Ledger* and Mr. Brock Hamrick of WZZQ.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 30-40-80(d), as amended, the following media outlets have been notified of the time, date, and agenda of this meeting: *The Cherokee Chronicle*, *The Gaffney Ledger*, *The Shelby Star*, *The Spartanburg Herald-Journal* and radio Stations WZZQ-AM AND WFGN, and television stations WSPA-TV, and WYFF4-TV.

Dr. Mark Nix called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and led everyone for the Pledge of Allegiance. He recognized the media members present, Mr. Scott Powell with *The Gaffney Ledger* and Mr. Brock Hamrick with WZZQ, and thanked them for coming.

Approval of the Board meeting agenda was the next item on the agenda. **Mrs. Gallman made the motion to approve the Board meeting agenda, seconded by Mrs. Shackelford. Trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

Approval of the Board meeting minutes dated December 12, 2022 was the next item on the agenda. **Mr. Blackwell made the motion to approve Board meeting minutes dated December 12, 2022, seconded by Mrs. Gallman. Trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

Honors/Accomplishments/Commendations were the next items on the agenda.

- **District Christmas Card Contest Winners**
 - Cassidy Childers – Inside Artwork Winner – Gaffney High School
 - Layla Beaver – Post Card Winner – BD Lee Elementary
- **USC Upstate Promise Scholar Winners**
 - Rylee Bell – Gaffney High School
 - Ayden Ham – Blacksburg High School
- **Gaffney High School Athletic Award Recognition - Region and State Qualifiers**
 - Football – Grayson Loftis – All State
 - Football – Nathan Johnson – All State and Upstate Defensive Player of the Year
 - Football – Brayshaw Littlejohn – All State
 - Football – Kaliber Hoey – All State

- Coach Dan Jones
- **Community Awards**
 - Jennifer Harrington – Hamrick's of Gaffney – Caring for the Carolinas
 - Hayden Trnavsky – Hamrick's of Gaffney – Caring for the Carolinas
 - Tressa Nickels – City of Gaffney – Angel Tree
- **Crystal Apple Recognition**
 - Administrator – Dr. Alan Ruppe – Gaffney Middle School
 - Certified – Cyndi Holmes – Blacksburg Primary
 - Classified – Phyllis Adams – Copeland Community Learning Center
 - Substitute – Kaylee Byars – Draytonville Elementary

School Board Policy BCBI – Public Participation was the next item on the agenda. **No requests were made to speak in front of the Trustees for this meeting.**

The Gaffney Middle School presentation made by Mr. Lyman Dawkins, Principal, was the next item on the agenda. Mr. Dawkins began with a thank you to the Board and Dr. Fall for supporting him and Gaffney Middle School. “On The Road to Excellence” is the school theme this year. Mr. Dawkins shared his personal information and his leadership philosophy. He shared that his vision for the school is to become the best school in Cherokee county, a premier school in the state, a South Carolina School to Watch, and an AVID National Demonstration School. On his “Roadmap to Excellence” he had 4 points: 1. Culture - Culture is what we believe, what we do, and who we are. 2. Climate – Climate is how people feel when they are on GMS campus. 3. Instruction – Instruction is effective, intentional, engaging, responsive, delivered with high expectation, and provide timely feedback. 4. Commitment to the Process of Excellence – Commitment is a burning desire to strive for excellence every single day and not settling for anything less! He shared the demographics, academics, and test scores for the school. He talked about the culture and climate of the school with all of the events and incentive programs he has for the students. He talked about the fine arts, athletics, and community relationships. Dr. Fall talked about the cafeteria workers who go above and beyond to get students in and out and said the staff has system in place to quickly clean and get ready for the next group. He said everyone matters, all staff. Mrs. Shackelford gave praise to the office staff. Ms. Dawkins stated seeing the test scores could be discouraging but then said “I thank you for your commitment to the school and the Mister Program. You need to hold the students and teachers accountable. You are going to do great.” Mrs. Shippy said “your presentation was phenomenal and exciting for everyone.” Mr. Cash stated “I taught middle school for one year, and it was very tough. You have nailed the relationships and have a great foundation.” Mr. Dawkins explained that middle school students shut down when they have issues. He said that punishment does not change behavior. You need to love on kids and have tough conversations with them. Mrs. Gallman stated that she feels the love and knows the students do also. Mr. Dawkins thanked the Board and Dr. Fall for supporting him. Dr. Nix said ‘You have made impacts and working hard in the right direction. Thank you for being part of our district.’ **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

The Cherokee County School Ministries policy was next on the agenda. Second Reading by Dr. Meredith Rose. **Dr. Nix made the motion to accept the second reading. Mr. Blackwell made the motion to approve. Ms. Dawkins seconded the motion. Trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

The review of the 2021–2022 Audit Findings – Mr. Ben Kochenower – Cline Brandt Kochenower & Co. Accountants was next on the agenda. Mr. Kochenower provided the Trustees with an overview of the favorable 2021-2022 audit findings, stating that the District was in accordance with all compliance factors and was under very strong financial management. The District had \$4.6 million in excess revenue over expenses for the year. **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

The review of the 2023-2024 Academic School Calendar Review Draft was next on the agenda. Dr. Meredith Rose presented three calendars for the Board to review. The Board requested a survey to be posted for staff and stakeholders to vote on which calendar they preferred. Dr. Rose will present the results at the next board meeting. **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

An Executive Session with personnel matters for the purpose of discussing the employment, discipline or release of an employee or employees of the District, Contractual Matters was the next item on the agenda. Dr. Nix called for a motion to go into Executive Session. **Mr. Sarratt made a motion that the Board enter into Executive Session for Personnel Matters for the purpose of discussing the employment, discipline or release of an employee or employees of the District, Contractual Matters, seconded by Mrs. Gallman. Trustees voted unanimously for the motion.** The Executive Session began at 7:26 PM and ended at 8:27 PM. Dr. Nix said the Board had been in Executive Session for personnel matters for the purpose of discussing the employment, discipline or release of an employee or employees of the District, Contractual Matters. **Ms. Dawkins made the motion to return to regular session, seconded by Mr. Cash. Trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

Action as needed from Executive Session was the next item on the agenda.

Mr. Blackwell made the request to rescind the former offer to sell Goucher to Goucher Charter Academy. Johnny Sarratt requested the Attorney for the School District give an explanation. Alex Sherard stated that during the transaction closing process they found a discrepancy in the charter sale. There was a financing and investing issue per Goucher Charter Academy counsel. The school district has requirements for the State Department of Education to sell the property. Goucher Charter Academy is still interested in purchasing the property. Mr. Blackwell made the motion to continue working with attorney on process to sell to Goucher Charter Academy. **Dr. Nix made the motion to rescind the offer but to continue working with Goucher Charter Academy. Mr. Blackwell made the motion to approve. Mr. Wilkins seconded the motion. Trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

The Superintendent's Report was the next item on the agenda.

Financial Update – 2023-2024 budget timeline. Dr. Fall informed the Board the timeline for the budget process was included in their packet. Mr. Blackwell stated he would like the Board Committee involved in the process. Dr. Nix stated he would get the committee together. **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

School Board Appreciation Month Schedule. Dr. Fall informed the board they received a copy in their packet of the school they were assigned to for the month. **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

Ethical Principles and Poster. Dr. Nix read the Ethics and Principles each Board Member is to follow. Each Board Member signed the poster, which will be placed in the board room. **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) – Due March 30, 2023. Dr. Fall reminded each board member this is due by March 30. He told them if they needed any assistance to reach out. **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

The Board Newsletter was the next item under the Superintendent’s Report. Dr. Fall provided the January newsletter to each Trustee that contains valuable Board information for their review. **This was presented for information only; no action was necessary.**

Announcements were the next items on the agenda. Dr. Fall shared that each board member and community members should monitor the current COVID numbers. There is an uptick in numbers for the month. He said everyone should practice social distancing and hand washing. **This item was received for information only; no action was necessary.**

Mr. Wilkins made no comment.

Mrs. Shippy said she enjoyed the meeting.

Mrs. Shackleford stated I have enjoyed this very productive meeting. Thank you Sheri Morgan. Mrs. Shackleford would like to see discussions for pay raises for teacher assistants, secretaries, and substitutes. She has enjoyed the positive coverage on the tiny home from the Institute of Innovation. She wants to schedule a meeting with Mr. Smith to tour the home.

Ms. Dawkins said she wanted to give a shout out to the Principals of Corinth Elementary, Mrs. Allison and Draytonville Elementary, Mrs. Sullivan. They have attended every Board Meeting. They support the Principal that is presenting. She gave them kudos for attending. She attended the Legislative Delegation update meeting with Senator Harvey Peeler, State Representative Dennis Moss, and State Representative Brian Lawson. She attended as a citizen. They are hoping to increase teacher pay. When the newly elected State Superintendent starts, they hope she will address recruitment and retention in the state and create incentives to get more people in education.

Mr. Blackwell provided an update on the State School Board Meeting. He stated the director positions for Region 2 and Region 8 have been filled. From his Legislative update he said, “There are 840 bills pre-filed. I will only discuss a couple that may pertain to our district. Senate Bill 295 discussed teacher’s pay and the national average. Senate Bill 64 will authorize districts to provide monetary bonuses to teachers. House Bill 3294 will limit teacher roles and responsibilities in the classroom. House Bill 3430 would extend Health and Dental coverage to School Board Members. They discussed the Surveys for the Annual Conference. There was a request for a change to be made to locations. Conferences are always held at Myrtle Beach or Hilton Head. This is due to the number of people who attend. The members would like to have more classes added for the veteran members. They understand the need for the

existing classes for the new members. They encouraged each board to get their Mission Statement out to the constituents. We need to publish them as much as you can.” They went around the room and the Board Members did not know their statement. He said everyone should learn their Mission Statement.

Mr. Cash stated he enjoyed the presentation for Gaffney Middle. The relationship focus with teacher, staff, and students make them feel like they belong.

Mrs. Gallman wished everyone a happy new year. She will review the audit book. She thanked Sherri Morgan for a good audit.

Mr. Sarratt stated he was glad to be back at the meeting. He was out due to health issues. He is very excited about Gaffney Middle School’s “Learning is lit theme”. Pass or fail it is a critical age. He hopes teachers will get behind Mr. Dawkins. His energy is in it. His heart is in it. Mr. Dawkins is doing great. Mr. Sarratt stated he worked with football team and saw the positive interactions with them and is looking forward to the rest of the school year.

Dr. Nix thanked the media for attending meeting and said, “thank you to Sherri Morgan. The District is financially sound and good low risk practice. We were smart on COVID funds and used money smart on one-time purchases. Thank you to Sherri Morgan and Dr. Fall.”

Dr. Nix called for a motion to adjourn. **Ms. Dawkins made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Wilkins. Trustees voted unanimously to adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.



Mr. Johnny Sarratt, Jr., Secretary

APPROVED BY:



Dr. Mark Nix, Chairman