

**LAURENS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #55
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING
LAURENS MIDDLE SCHOOL
MARCH 27, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.**

Present: Trustees Anthony Carpenter, Cathy Little, Peggy Nance, Neal Patterson, Bubba Rawl, Todd Varner; Superintendent Dr. Ameca Thomas

Not Present: Trustee Mike Hughes

OPENING BUSINESS

1. **Call to Order** – Cathy Little called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Laurens Middle School.
2. **Confirmation of Notice to Media** – Lisa Wilson confirmed that broadcast and print media were notified of the meeting.
3. **Confirmation of a Quorum** – Cathy Little confirmed that a quorum was present with six trustees in attendance.
4. **Approval of Agenda** – Neal Patterson made a motion to approve the agenda. Bubba Rawl seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.
5. **Welcome** – Cathy Little welcomed those in attendance and recognized Lisa Wilson on the occasion of her retirement.
6. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Sean Sullivan, US Army Veteran, led the Pledge of Allegiance.
7. **Prayer** – Peggy Nance led in prayer.
8. **Approval of Minutes for February 27, 2023** – Bubba Rawl made a motion to approve the minutes of the monthly meeting held on February 27, 2023. Neal Patterson seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

LAURENS MIDDLE SCHOOL REPORT – Clay Cotney, Laurens Middle School Principal, presented a report that included examples of the school's focus on safety and school culture, high quality instruction, academic achievement, and community and family engagement. Examples of HMH, SC READ, and MAP scores were presented.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. **District Updates** – Superintendent Dr. Ameca Thomas reported on the following:
 - The district uses formative assessments to measure growth and for data-driven decision-making. Data indicates that in some cases, LCSD 55 schools scored better than in 2017 and 2018. Data indicates growth in all areas and the district remains focused on continued progress. The data also indicates more growth than the state for ELA in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7. LCSD 55 did not show more growth than the state in grades 4 and 8. Also, in math

- data indicates more growth than the state in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8, but not in grade 7.
- Research shows that under normal circumstances, it takes 3-5 years to see substantial change. Research suggests that with current conditions and climate, it takes 5-7 years to see that change. LCSD 55 is working with a sense of urgency to continue to substantiate growth and progress.
 - The superintendent reiterated the importance of keeping the main thing the main thing - - students.
 - One of the processes in place to help substantiate growth and progress for students is through the Academic Recovery Intervention Program. During the fall and spring of the 2022-2023 school year, interventionists have served 1,299 students.
 - LDHS student Chalen Smallwood was recently recognized for becoming a licensed, certified drone pilot through the LDHS Drone Academy.
 - Through a continued partnership with Lander University, LCSD 55 is able to offer additional dual-enrollment classes that are easier to transfer to most four-year colleges/universities.
 - Partnering with Mental Health Support-Cook Center for Human Connections, LCSD 55 is able to provide resources and support for students, families, staff, and community members.
 - LCSD 55 is now in a partnership with TruConnect to offer eligible families free smartphones or tablets, and free internet service.
 - The South Carolina Department of Education and the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee have distributed parent, student, and teacher climate surveys to be administered by public schools. Information from the teacher and student surveys will be used in the state and federal accountability models.
 - As a result of the national teacher shortage, LCSD 55 has implemented a local Recruitment and Retention Task Force. One initiative recently developed is the Stay Interview to collect valuable data and insights surrounding what keeps employees in the district.
 - Trustees were reminded that the annual Statement of Economic Interest reports with the South Carolina Ethics Commission are due annually by March 31.
2. **Children's Internet Protection Act/E-Rate Report** – Danny Frady presented the annual report of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), a federal law enacted by Congress to address concerns about access to offensive content over the Internet on school and library computers. CIPA imposes certain types of requirements on any school or library that receives funding for Internet access or internal connections from the E-rate program - a program that makes certain communications technology more affordable for eligible schools and libraries. LCSD 55 has adopted and enforces district policies aligned with CIPA requirements.

BOARD OPERATIONS

1. **Second Reading – Policy GCLE *Unencumbered Time*, JB *Equal Educational Opportunity/Nondiscrimination*, JJAB *Limited Open Forum*, KDC *District-Sponsored Information Media*** – Renee Madden presented the policies for second reading and requested board approval. Neal Patterson made a motion to approve policies GCLE, JB, JJAB, and KDC. Todd Varner seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

2. **For Information – Administrative Rule GCLE-R Unencumbered Time Second Reading** – Renee Madden presented the administrative rule for information.
3. **2023-2024 Schedule of Monthly Board Meetings** – Cathy Little presented the proposed schedule of 2023-2024 monthly meetings for board approval. Anthony Carpenter made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 schedule of monthly board meetings. Neal Patterson seconded. The motion carried with no opposition and the following schedule was adopted.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
August 28, 2023	Hickory Tavern School
September 25, 2023	Ford Elementary School
October 23, 2023	E.B. Morse Elementary School
November 27, 2023	Laurens Elementary School
January 22, 2024	Waterloo Elementary School
February 26, 2024	Sanders Middle School
March 25, 2024	Laurens Middle School
April 22, 2024	Laurens District 55 High School
May 20, 2024	Gray Court-Owings School
June 24, 2024	LCSD 55 Administrative Office

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

1. **Monthly Financial Report** – Jim Lollis presented financial information for the month ending February 28, 2023, as follows:
Balance with the County Treasurer = \$15,241,237
Revenues = \$37,157,119
Expenditures = \$30,415,735
Difference = \$6,741,384
Total Tax Collections = \$926,788
2. **Cenergistic Update** – Phillip Roberts was introduced as the LCSD 55 Cenergistic Energy Specialist. Information was presented about the steps taken thus far in the process and plans for the future of the program.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Cathy Little recognized individuals for public participation.

1. Dr. Catherine Evans
2. Wilamena Jones
3. Elma Morrison
4. Gregory Fielder – was not in attendance
5. Kristal Tribble
6. Jessie Davis

MOTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION – Neal Patterson made a motion to enter

executive session to receive certified employment contract recommendations for school year 2023-2024. Todd Varner seconded. The motion carried at 7:39 p.m. and trustees moved to the school library for executive session.

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION – Cathy Little called the meeting to order in open session in the school auditorium at 8:18 p.m.

ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION IF NEEDED

- 1. Certified Employment Contract Recommendations for School Year 2023-2024** – Neal Patterson made a motion to approve the certified contract recommendations on List A for the 2023-2024 school year. Todd Varner seconded. The motion carried with no opposition.

Neal Patterson made a motion to approve the certified contract recommendation on List B for the 2023-2024 school year. Bubba Rawl seconded. The motion carried on a vote of 5:0:1, with Cathy Little not voting.

ADJOURNMENT – Todd Varner made a motion to adjourn. Bubba Rawl seconded. The motion carried with no opposition. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Lisa Wilson
Recorder

lwilson March 30, 2023