

Anderson County Board of Education
402 Bleckley Street, Anderson, South Carolina 29625
September 16, 2013

Call to Order

Mr. David Draisen called the meeting to order and Reverend Mitchell gave the invocation after which everyone joined in the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag.

Board Members Present:

The following Board Members were present: Mr. David Draisen, Ms. Dana Grant, Dr. Gary Burgess, Mr. Dale Martin, Mr. Mike Brock, Rev. Dr. Rufus Mitchell, and Joey Nimmer, Ex Officio.

Ms. Brenda Bradberry, Dr. Craig Drennon, and Mr. Mike Upton were not in attendance.

Approval of Agenda

Dr. Gary Burgess made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Mike Brock seconded the motion and the Board members approved the agenda unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – August 19, 2013 Meeting

Mr. Dale Martin made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2013 meeting. A second for approval was made by Dr. Gary Burgess and was followed by a unanimous vote from the Board.

Recognition of Media and Patrons / Public Comment Period

Ms. Allison Youngblood, a parent of District 5 schools, was in attendance to address the Board. She stated that she has been nothing but pleased with the teachers and administrators in the district and has had nothing but good experiences with her own children, but was there to make the Board aware of a student she had gotten to know of the past several years. She and her husband learned from a recent conversation that this young man, a senior at Westside High School, was homeless and had nowhere to stay because his mother had lost her apartment. That night they placed him in a hotel room and the next morning he called to let them know he was ready for school. She took him to school, registered him and learned of his educational history.

Ms. Youngblood stated that this young man was diagnosed with ADHD when he was six years old and placed in a self-contained learning environment. She stated he was given a psychological examination in the sixth grade and was to be reexamined in the ninth grade but was not. Ms. Youngblood stated that he has spent the last six years of his educational career in special needs classes and placed on the certificate tract and will never have the ability to earn a high school diploma. Upon further investigation, Ms. Youngblood stated the student had tested average intelligence and passed the ELA portion of the HSAP Test in the tenth grade. She added that even though he has never been provided the traditional educational experience he was still able to succeed.

Ms. Youngblood stated that she wanted to Board to be aware of this student's experience, but was not there to ask for help with him. She would be assisting him with everything he needed to get back on track and has already been to Tri-County Technical College to get him in the Connect to College program.

Ms. Youngblood stated that she there to address the Board on behalf of future students that may be overlooked as this student had. She was interested in learning the processes and procedures that take place regarding the certificate track and wants to know how she can help prevent this from happening in the future. Ms. Youngblood concluded that placing a student with average intelligence in this type learning environment and labeling him special needs was not acceptable.

Chairman David Draisen explained that the Anderson County Board of Education was strictly involved with district budgets and not each district's policies. Chairman Draisen stated that Mr. Nimmer, Board of Education Administrator, could meet with her and give her direction as to who she needed to speak with in the individual school districts. Mr. Nimmer stated that he would first meet with District Five's superintendent and explain the situation in great detail. The superintendent would then make a recommendation how to follow up within that district. Mr. Nimmer advised if she did not achieve satisfaction there were other avenues. Mr. Nimmer added that although he could not speak for Superintendent Wilson, but believes after personally working with him, that he will take her concerns very seriously and address the issues. Dr. Burgess stated that sometimes these circumstances do occur when a student does not have a strong advocate. Ms. Youngblood agreed that this was the case as his mother had been involved but due to her level of education she trusted the people who made these decisions.

Ms. Dana Grant asked could he not be placed on the diploma track at this point. Ms. Youngblood understood that he could not, because he would age out prior to obtaining a diploma. Ms. Youngblood stated the Connect to College would allow him to complete the program as long as he was sponsored by District Five, but because of the rigorous learning process of the program, he could not work to support himself. Mr. Nimmer suggested she consider the Adult Education Program provided for Anderson County as they did have a program to earn a high school diploma. Ms. Youngblood stated that in researching this avenue, she learned he had to have Carnegie Units to earn a diploma, and he had zero units so therefore he would have to participate in the Tri-County program. Ms. Dana Grant stated that if she ran into any problems with the Tri-County program, there was an alternative program, Common Youth Connection, which could provide some financial assistance if he was no longer eligible to participate in the regular school system. After further discussion, the Board applauded Ms. Youngblood's efforts and felt positive that Superintendent Wilson would address the issue and provide the assistance she would need to assist in this student's success.

Anderson County Alternative School Report

Mr. Mike Brock supplied the board members with a copy of the Alternative School Report and informed them that at the beginning of the year the enrollment was 42 students, but had already risen to 51 students. Mr. Brock called their attention to a section on the report stating that one of the enrolled students from District 2 had been withdrawn and placed in a group home in Greenville. Mr. Brock also commented that the Belton and Honea Path schools had as many students enrolled as District 5. Chairman David Draisen also commented that the Belton Honea Path area was much smaller area than District 5. Mr. Nimmer stated that this is due to a transitional issue in District 5 as the previous Superintendent was going to send the students back to their schools, but after a conversation with the new Superintendent, Mr. Tom Wilson, he was planning on sending a portion of the students back to the Alternative School.

Dr. Gary Burgess referred to the section of the report that listed enrollment by grade level and ethnicity and questioned if the ethnicity of mixed is self-determined. Mr. Brock answered that ethnicity is prescribed by the State of South Carolina and Mr. Nimmer added that the students are ethnically identified at school level.

Administrator's Report

Mr. Nimmer informed the Board that Ms. Brenda Bradberry is continuing to recover at home from her second rotator cuff surgery on the same shoulder and has had a hard time during her recovery since the surgery approximately six weeks prior. Mr. Nimmer told the board that he has tried to visit her at least once a week, but this past week has been her worst week so far. Chairman Draisen asked if she was currently involved in physical therapy and Mr. Nimmer answered yes but other than the therapy, she was staying in bed to avoid any unnecessary movement and pain.

Mr. Nimmer called the Board's attention to the invitation from County Council for an Anderson County Joint Meeting that would include the Anderson County Board of Education, members of the Anderson County Legislative Delegation, Anderson County Council and the Boards of Trustees of Anderson County School Districts 1 through 5, to be held September 24th from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Anderson Civic Center. Mr. Nimmer stated that this meeting was a result of the Fee in Lieu Of Tax discussions with County Council. Mr. Nimmer stated that he would be glad to RSVP for any of the board members that wish to attend. Board Members Mr. David Draisen, Ms. Dana Grant, Dr. Gary Burgess, Mr. Mike Brock and Reverend Dr. Rufus Mitchell indicated they would be attending the meeting.

Mr. Nimmer informed the Board that annual school visits were underway. Mr. Nimmer added the Board is now servicing all five school districts in Anderson County with school based mental health counselors adding District Five and a dedicated counselor to District Two. Mr. Nimmer stated that during the visits, attendance and mental health issues are being covered and so far the meetings have all been very positive.

Mr. Nimmer informed the Board that the new mental health counselors are now on board with the exception of one who is out on maternity leave and would be starting soon. Mr. Nimmer said they are now place and in their first week at the schools.

Mr. Nimmer asked the board members if anyone was available to attend the District Five Board Meeting scheduled for September 17, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Nimmer stated that if you are able to attend to please let us know and we would relay the information to District Five.

Mr. Brock asked Mr. Nimmer about the new Food Service Director. Mr. Nimmer informed the Board Ms. Julie Peles was already well into her position and doing a good job. He stated that she was familiarizing herself with the schools, managers and personnel. Mr. Nimmer added that she was currently working an average of three to four days per week in the office and at the schools as well and it was working out well.

Financial

A. Tax Collections YTD vs. Budget

Mr. Nimmer stated that collections are typical for this time of year which is minimal. Mr.

Nimmer continued that cash flow is challenging this time of year, now and typically the month of November. Mr. Nimmer stated that tax collections are fairly consistent during this period with the exception of District Two and what makes their collection rate higher is they have collected some fee money. Mr. Nimmer called the Board's attention to District Four as they are behind the other district in collections due to the fact that get more local money and less state dollars.

B. Assessment Totals – August 31, 2013

Mr. Nimmer stated that currently Anderson County is undergoing reassessment right now and the assessment total value of a mill across the county has remained constant since last month but that will change. He stated that the reassessment schedule is out and they hope to have millage set and the tax bills prepared by the first week of October assuming all of the reassessment numbers are in. Mr. Nimmer added based on what the new numbers are will determine whether or not there is a roll back millage provision implemented but as of the meeting last week there was no anticipated rollback millage. Mr. Nimmer concluded that the assessments should stay within the 3-4% increase range from the previous year's tax bills to the new tax bills.

Old Business

Dr. Gary Burgess asked how the overages in taxes that remain in the budget at the end of the fiscal year are spent in the school districts and asked for some examples of how they plan to spend those monies. Mr. Nimmer explained that it is usually plowed back into the general fund but details of how the districts plan to spend the overages will not be detailed until the audits are complete. Dr. Burgess stated that in his district they plan to designate it to projects such as capital improvements instead of using it to balance their budget. Mr. Nimmer added that not only are the overages designated for the general fund and used for special projects but also used as a source of cash flow in the months prior to infusion of larger tax collections. Mr. Nimmer stated that once the audits are available, we will ask each district to detail how they plan to utilize those funds if the Board was agreeable and the Board was in favor of doing so.

New Business

A. ADM Accounts Payable

B. SFS Accounts Payable

Mr. Mike Brock made a motion to pay the bills as proposed. Mr. Dale Martin seconded the motion and the Board approved the payments unanimously.

Adjourn

Mr. Draisen made a motion that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Gary Burgess, Secretary of the Anderson County Board of Education
This is a true and correct copy of notes taken at the meeting.