

Anderson County Board of Education  
402 Bleckley Street, Anderson, South Carolina 29625  
February 17, 2014

**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, Dr. Craig Drennon, Mr. Dale Martin, Mr. Mike Brock, Ms. Dana Grant, Mr. Mike Upton, Rev. Dr. Rufus Mitchell and Joey Nimmer, Ex Officio.

The following Board Members were not in attendance: Ms. Brenda Bradberry and Dr. Gary Burgess

**Approval of Agenda**

Reverend Rufus Mitchell made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Mike Brock seconded motion and the agenda was approved with a unanimous vote.

**Approval of Minutes – January 21, 2014 Meeting**

Mr. Dale Martin made a motion to approve the minutes and Dr. Craig Drennon seconded the motion. With a unanimous vote, the board approved the minutes of the January 2014 meeting.

**Recognition of Media and Patrons / Public Comment Period**

No representatives from media or public were in attendance to address the Board.

**Consideration of Resolution in Support of Referendum For Local Option Sales Tax**

A resolution in support of a November referendum question establishing a 1% local option sales tax was presented. Mr. Nimmer stated that a similar resolution has been passed by all five school districts prior to the County Board's consideration. Mr. Mike Upton made a motion to consider the resolution seconded by Rev. Rufus Mitchell. Mr. Nimmer stated that the proceeds from the 1% sales tax will be distributed uniformly across the county and at today's dollar would equate to approximately \$13 million dollars per year and would be allocated back to the districts on a per pupil basis. The districts would then use the proceeds in two ways. First, capital investment such as bricks and mortar, technology or security upgrades would use approximately 80% of the proceeds. The remaining balance would be used in property tax roll back on the debt service millage side of the county tax bills. Mr. Nimmer stated that would be applied to all classifications of properties so all of the businesses and individuals that have been adversely impacted by Act 388 would get some measure of relief under this program.

Mr. Mike Upton asked Mr. Nimmer if the percentage breakdown would remain fixed and Mr. Nimmer stated that those details are being worked on now and will be finalized by the Ways and Means Committee at the state level in Columbia. Mr. Nimmer continued that this resolution would be presented to the Anderson County Legislative Delegation which will then generate a resolution question at the state level and will put this question before the people in the November 2014 general election as a

ballot question. Mr. Nimmer then deferred questions to Superintendent David Havird of District One and Superintendent Thomas Wilson of District Five as they had worked on the resolution. Mr. Nimmer asked the superintendents if they were aware if any other of the school districts have used the property tax rollback provision. Superintendent Havird stated that he was not sure but that all five school districts have committed to use at least 20%. Mr. Mike Upton asked for clarification that regardless of the percentage breakdown that would be set that 100% of taxes collected be designated for education and not "up for grabs" by anyone else and Mr. Nimmer stated yes, that all proceeds would be designated for the five school districts only. Chairman Draisen stated that in the meetings that were held with all of the districts that a career and technology center would be formed between districts three, four and five. Chairman Draisen stated that in light of so many students that will not be going to college and businesses and industry are in need of skilled workers, this would be of great benefit to Anderson County. Mr. Nimmer commended the districts on working together to form a unified effort to present to the Delegation. Mr. Mike Brock asked if the districts have already presented this to the Delegation, why was it before this board for consideration. Mr. Nimmer stated that the Delegation requested that this be presented to the Anderson County Board of Education for consideration and to get the Board's support. Mr. Brock remarked that this was bad timing to put on the backs of the tax payers in light of an upcoming increased gas sales tax. A vote was requested by Chairman Draisen. All members presented voted in favor of the resolution with the exception of Mr. Mike Brock and Mr. Dale Martin who voted in opposition.

#### **Consideration of Anderson School District One Bond Refunding**

Mr. Nimmer called the Board's attention to the information in their packets regarding the consideration of the refunding of approximately \$24 million dollars in bonds for Anderson School District One. He stated that refinancing the bonds at a more favorable interest rate would save significant amounts of money. Mr. Nimmer stated the amount of projected saving that was originally mentioned was approximately understated by half. Mr. Nimmer stated that also included in the information was a memorandum to him from Superintendent David Havird of District One with a debt service schedule and Superintendent Havird will use that information to explain what District One is trying to do.

Superintendent Havird thanked the Board for their consideration of the refunding and the opportunity to explain the request on behalf of the District One's Board of Trustees. Superintendent Havird stated that Anderson District One works diligently on stewardship and is in constant communication with their attorneys for ways to refinance and save the tax payers money. Superintendent Havird stated with this opportunity, in light of the already low interest rates, that the refinancing will enable the District to save approximately \$800,000 and continue to save in the subsequent years to come as listed. The Superintendent stated that District One's Board approved the refunding request unanimously at their last meeting and asked that they present it to the Anderson County Board for approval as well.

Mr. Dale Martin made a motion to approve the refunding seconded by Mr. Mike Upton followed by a unanimous vote.

Before moving to the next agenda item Chairman Draisen appointed Mr. Mike Brock to sign the approval of the Minutes from the January 2014 meeting as Dr. Gary Burgess, Board Secretary, was not in attendance.

## **Presentation of Tiered Diploma Proposal**

Mr. Nimmer stated that Ms. Brenda Bradberry asked that he convey her apologies to Superintendent Wilson for not being in attendance as she was not feeling well.

District Five's Superintendent Thomas Wilson was in attendance to present to the Board a tiered diploma program and give the Board a quick update of some discussions at the state level regarding diploma options available to students. Superintendent Wilson cited that currently over a million students in this country drop out of high school because they feel that a lot of the classes were boring and irrelevant. Superintendent Wilson stated that in 1970 if you dropped out there was somewhere to go to gain employment but in light of all of the local mills closing that no longer was the case. He stated that the schools were doing an excellent job of graduating students to go to college but not skilled workers to fill the current needs of private business and industry. Superintendent Wilson explained the current ratio of retirees to workers was steadily decreasing year by year and that with 40% of workers are close to the age of retirement and there is a need to produce students that were workforce ready. Superintendent Wilson stated that in 1970 there were 3.7 workers for every person on Social Security benefits and Medicare and currently there were only 2.9. He further cited that by the year 2030 there will be only an estimated 2 workers for every retiree and there will be more people riding the train than pulling the train which accentuates the importance of graduating students who are workforce ready. Superintendent Wilson stated that it was very important that we graduate skilled students to recruit business and industry to our area and to the State of South Carolina. Superintendent Wilson stated that in the state there are 26 percent of the workforce that have a two year degree or higher and only 20 percent of the jobs require a degree.

Superintendent Wilson stated that currently there are 24 units required for graduation and only 17 were mandated by the state. Superintendent Wilson commented that reforming public education is a difficult task, but this change isn't going to be driven by educators, but will be driven by politicians, business and industry. Superintendent Wilson reported that after a visit by State Superintendent Mick Zais and a conversation regarding these issues, a presentation was made to him and his advisory board that was made up of superintendents and businesses and seemed to get a good response. Superintendent Wilson stated that it was one of the reasons that the district is wanting to partner with districts three, four and five in building on the campus of Tri County Technical College's Anderson Campus and partner with them so that students can take advantage of dual enrollment.

Superintendent Wilson outlined the tiered program which includes options for students to obtain a college prep diploma, a career specific diploma or a general career diploma. He also stated he wasn't sure how much horse power this program has or where it would go, but stated that if we continue on the current path we will continue to have a high dropout rate. Superintendent Wilson said that he was surprised when Dr. Zais asked for the district to present the program and that he was in favor of it and he was hopeful that the next state superintendent will also be in favor of it as well. Mr. Nimmer stated that Dr. Zais was recently was at a recent Tri County Technical College Education Summit and was very supportive.

Chairman Draisen asked if this program would require state legislature approval or be handed down by the state education superintendent. Superintendent Wilson answered that he believed that it could either be enacted by rule or by legislation. Mr. Nimmer stated that a rule is a recommendation to the state legislature and would require some type of action at the State House. Chairman Draisen also asked if Superintendent Wilson had any type of barometer to gauge how the legislators feel toward the program. Superintendent Wilson answered that they have talked with some members of the Anderson

County Delegation and have also met with the Chairman of the House Education Committee Phil Owens and would be going to Columbia on March 5, 2014 to do some follow up on the 1% sales tax. He also said that the proposed program certainly needs more study and he would like to see a joint task force between educators and business involving key stakeholders that have the power to get things done and come up with a consensus on where the program needs to go. Superintendent Havird from District One stated that the figures used in the presentation are correct but the key to keeping students in school is to have a very effective career and technology center. Superintendent Wilson stated that although district five has a career center it is in need of some upgrades, but the tax will enabling districts three, four and five to partner with local industry such as Bosch and Michelin to provide students with labs that are actually in the workplace. He shared his excitement to continue discussions about the program and also the 1% sales tax that will build this facility. Superintendent Wilson stated that one thing the legislators liked about the program was the collaborative efforts between the districts. Mr. Nimmer shared that one of the things that was also mentioned was the fact that Crescent and Pendleton High Schools were now comprehensive high schools with some of those classroom spaces within the existing schools and that it would free up classroom space for additional academic coursework there. Dr. Craig Drennon applauded the districts for their efforts and stated that he had been a principal of a large comprehensive high school in Columbia and it makes a difference when you can offer those classes in the schools so there is no need for them to travel to take those electives.

Chairman Draisen asked Superintendent Wilson if the two new athletic directors would serve roles in addition to athletic directors. Superintendent Wilson answered they would both serve as assistant principals and were both certified in administration. Chairman Draisen then asked if the vacated position on the Board of Trustees was going to be filled. Superintendent Wilson stated their board has had discussions about appointing someone versus waiting until the election in November 2014. He stated that it was an at large position but the seat has a representative in Mr. Blankenship but their board was concerned about appointing someone who would have an advantage of getting re-elected. Chairman Draisen stated that once they make a recommendation on the appointment to District's Board of Trustee, the Anderson County Board of Education would appoint that person for the vacant board seat. Chairman Draisen continued that although it was his personal opinion, the people voted on that position and they deserve to have someone serve in that seat. Chairman Draisen asked for district five to make a recommendation as to who they would like to place there and Superintendent Wilson stated that he would provide a recommendation to the board for consideration. The Board thanked Superintendent Wilson for sharing the information with them.

### **Anderson County Alternative School Report**

Mr. Mike Brock distributed the Alternative School Report to all of the board members for review. Mr. Brock informed board members that the report was abbreviated due to school not being in the previous week and stated that the total enrollment had gone up since the last report and was now at 107. Mr. Nimmer verified this was correct and there was 24 students on the waiting list. Mr. Nimmer added that since the Alternative School's board meeting last month the special education teacher position has been posted but did not have any information on the status of the vacancy. Mr. Nimmer stated that last year during the same time frame of this report there was a total of 88 students versus the current reporting period of 107 plus the 24 students on the waiting list. Mr. Nimmer stated that it was interesting to note that last year at this time with the lower enrollment we still had we still had 15 special education students enrolled so 15 out of 88 last year we now have 16 out of 107, but that number is misleading based on the waiting list. Superintendent Havird stated that he had a conversation with Mr. Dillingham

today that they were finalizing the recommendation. Mr. Nimmer stated that what was decided that the special education teacher would be hired for the remainder of the school year and treated as a long term substitute paid on a daily rate and to analyze the enrollment of special education students and based on how the enrollment goes will determine the need for hiring a teacher for next school year. Ms. Dana Grant asked how many of the 24 students on the waiting list were special education students and Mr. Nimmer stated that all of those students were special education students. Mr. Nimmer stated that with the addition of the position they would be able to handle the enrollment of the 40 special education students as opposed to the 16 students that has been the cap thus far. Ms. Dana Grant asked what was the total capacity of enrollment of the Alternative School and Mr. Nimmer answered the total capacity was 135.

### **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Nimmer reminded the Board that their filing of a Statement of Economic Interest must be completed and filed online by noon on March 30, 2014 with the South Carolina Ethics Commission and offered to assist anyone with their filing.

Mr. Nimmer reminded the board members of the upcoming SCSBA 2014 Annual Conference to be held in Myrtle Beach February 20-23, 2014, and provided the board members that would be attending with an updated itinerary.

Mr. Nimmer provided board members with the newly adopted calendar for the 2014-2015 school year.

Mr. Nimmer also informed board member that the Board of Economic Advisors have met and have upgraded their state revenue projections for the upcoming year budget year and it will be approximately \$100 million dollars to be added to that pool to be budgeted for the upcoming 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Mr. Nimmer stated for the record that Ms. Bradberry's absence was due to an illness as she was experiencing vertigo and wanted to make sure everyone knew why she was not in attendance.

### **Financial**

#### **A. Tax Collections YTD vs. Budget**

Mr. Nimmer stated the year to date revenue collections through January 31, 2014, and as has been the case and have remained remarkably consistent. Mr. Nimmer stated that revenues have been a little bit ahead this year as opposed to what they have been in the past couple of years and hopes this is a good sign that our local economy is moving along well. Mr. Nimmer called the Board's attention to District 4 and stated they are ahead of other districts because more of their total revenue is derived from the local pool. Chairman Draisen remarked that revenues for the Anderson County Board of Education was behind and Mr. Nimmer replied this was because of the recent weather and closings at the end of January 2014 so there was a delay in getting the revenues posted, and will be reflected in the February 2014 report.

#### **B. Assessment Totals – January 31, 2014**

Mr. Nimmer stated in the assessment totals we see a drop for the current month of about \$2,400 per mill county-wide and is primarily due to appeals and to changes in the classifications of some property so there is a little lag but is a minimal amount compared to what it has been in

the past. Mr. Nimmer stated these numbers should continue to rise as federal tax refunds work their way back locally because returns couldn't be filed prior to January 31<sup>st</sup> due to the sequestration at the federal level. Mr. Nimmer explained that as the money is returned it normally spurs a rise in the sale of automobiles which is normally reflected in February and March but will probably be reflected in March, April and May of this year.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

### **New Business**

Chairman Draisen gave a recap on a recent trip to Washington DC to participate in the National School Board Association's Leadership Conference and Advocacy Institute that he, Dr. Gary Burgess and Mr. Nimmer attended this month and had some very productive sessions with Senator Lindsay Graham and some of the staff of Jeff Duncan. Chairman Draisen stated that he learned a lot about education in Washington and that Senator Graham's first statement was, how much of education is paid for by the Federal Government, which was approximately 6%. Chairman remarked that in a larger school district, 6% is just that, but in a smaller school district it is a lot of money to Anderson County.

#### **A. ADM Accounts Payable**

#### **B. SFS Accounts Payable**

Dr. Craig Drennon made a motion to pay the bills submitted for review and Mr. Dale Martin seconded the motion. With a unanimous vote, the Board approved the expenditures as listed.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Draisen adjourned the meeting.

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.