

Anderson County Board of Education
907 North Main Street, Suite 202, Anderson, South Carolina 29621
April 21, 2025

Call to Order: Chairman Mr. Mike Upton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Rev. Jason Dorriety 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 at the meeting: Dr. Doug Atkins, Mr. Greg Balog, Mr. David Blanding, Dr. Gary Burgess, Mr. C. Nakia Davis, Rev. Jason Dorriety, Dr. Vaughn Parfitt, Mr. Mike Upton, Mr. Mark Williamson, and Mrs. Susan Binninger ex officio.

Board Members Absent:

Approval of Agenda: Dr. Gary Burgess made a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Vaughn Parfitt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Dr. Vaughn Parfitt made a motion to approve the March 17, 2024, meeting minutes and Dr. Doug Atkins seconded the motion. They were approved unanimously.

Recognition of Media and Patrons / Public Comment Period: Mr. Mike Upton welcomed the following attendees to the meeting: Mr. John Benca, Anderson County Auditor; Mr. Seth Young, Superintendent of District One; Ms. Kathy Hipp, Superintendent of District Three; Ms. Paulette Grate, District Four; Ms. Melissa Hood, Ms. Nancy Upton, District One; Ms. Hannah Arnold, District Three; and Mr. Bill Thompson, District Five, to the meeting.

Presentation by Mr. John Benca, Anderson County Auditor: Mr. John Benca, Anderson County Auditor, discussed and answered questions about how the auditor's report and the value of a mill relates to our school districts. Mr. Benca spoke about what the auditor's office does daily. He let everyone know that each year the tax departments and public service authorities develop revenue required by the jurisdiction and the effective mill levy.

To determine the mill levy, most tax jurisdictions use a percentage formula. The percentage is known as the assessment ratio which determines the property value of a mill. After collection of the mill levy, the tax department will distribute the funds among several authorities, which are entities that are responsible for a service, such as public schools, so they can use the fund accordingly.

Mr. Mark Williamson asked if the agricultural property (old family farms) that are being sold for residential property is being tracked.

Mr. Benca stated that it is being tracked and billing rollback taxes. Agricultural property is taxed 4%.

Mr. Mike Upton asked if there is a limit on how many acres you can count as residential if you own a lot.

Mr. Benca said that you can count your house and one acre.

Mr. Greg Balog asked if you are over 65 years old, do you get an exemption on homestead and how does Columbia determine the value of a vehicle.

Mr. Benca stated that if you are over 65 years old you get an exemption on your homestead. Columbia has a contracted database that they use, and they also use Kelly Blue Book to determine the value of a vehicle.

Vehicles over 11,000 pounds, RVs, and boats, including the motor is taxed 10.5%. Vehicles less than 11,000 pounds are taxed 6%. An antique automobile is exempt if it is for show and not an everyday vehicle. Aircraft is 4% tax. Personal business property and manufactures are taxed 10.5%.

Reports

A. Renaissance Academy Report: Mrs. Binninger provided the board members with the monthly report on enrollment information for the academy. Mrs. Binninger stated that there are 91 students currently enrolled as of April 11, 2025. Nine are in the process of enrolling, for a total of 100 students. This time last year, there were 107 students enrolled. This is a decrease of 16 students. On the back side of the report, reasons for students leaving the academy are identified.

B. Administrator's Report: Mrs. Binninger announced that the School Law Conference will be on August 23rd and 24th in Charleston SC. Please let Mrs. Binninger know if you would like to attend the School Law conference.

Mrs. Binninger stated that Teacher of the Year for School District Three, Terri Ivester, is a finalist for the State Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Binninger informed everyone that School District Five has sold their surplus for \$16,673.00.

Mrs. Binninger gave a report on the 135 ADM preliminary data. There are 145 fewer students countywide since the 45 ADM. All five districts report a combined total of about 500 fewer students since 2024.

Dr. Vaughn Parfitt spoke briefly about the Legislative update from the Day at the Capital on April 9th. Teachers could see a pay increase of \$1,500.00.

Lawmakers in the Senate and House passed a bill aimed at addressing the provisions of the current Education Scholarship Trust Fund program which ruled unconstitutional this past fall. It was set to be implemented this school year, providing \$6,000.00 scholarships in online accounts for each eligible student to use for payments to qualified education service providers for approved expenses. This money can also be transferred to public schools.

Legislation would like a bill to be passed for penalties for unlawful passing of school bus. If a school bus is passed when they are stopped with the warning signals, stop sign and lights, activated the bus driver is to report this information within 24 hours to the SC Department of Education.

Mrs. Binninger asked the board for permission to donate the old furniture items to Haven of Rest. Dr. Gary Burgess made a motion to donate the furniture to Haven of Rest. Mr. Greg Balog seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

C. Financial

1. Tax Collection YTD vs. Budget: Mrs. Binninger reported that all 5 Districts, Renaissance Academy, and County Board are at 70%-81% in collections of their local revenue. Property tax relief funds were received late last week, so they are not included in the report. Homestead tax funds should be coming in soon. The numbers should go up next month when these two items are figured into the totals.

2. Assessment Totals: Mrs. Binninger reviewed the report for assessment totals county wide through the end of March 2025 at \$1,118,813,984 value of one mill. This is an increase of \$199.00 since the February report.

3. Education Sales & Use Tax: Mrs. Binninger reported the Education Sales & Use Tax collected in March was \$3,072,379.07. Mrs. Binninger stated that this is a decrease from February and an increase of \$83,000.00 from this time last year. Mrs. Binninger reminded everyone that 20% of these funds are posted to the sinking fund accounts of the districts to roll back debt service millage. The remaining 80% goes to capital projects.

4. Accounts Payable: Lastly, Mrs. Binninger presented the accounts payable showing the bills that have been paid from March 16, 2025 to April 15, 2025. Dr. Gary Burgess made a motion to pay the bills. Dr. Vaughn Parfitt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

D. Budget Committee Report:

1. Revised School Districts' Budget Process Forms: Mrs. Binninger stated that the revised forms would provide a clearer understanding of both revenues and expenses. This enhanced clarity would offer a more comprehensive view of each district's budget. Additionally, the updated forms would include data spanning four years, as opposed to the two years previously provided by the school district. Mr. Mark Williamson suggested that the analysis pages be numbered to make it easier to locate specific information instead of using the headers. Mr. Mike Upton called for a Motion to be made to accept the new budget forms. Dr. Doug Atkins made a motion to approve the forms and Mr. David Blanding seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

A. Consideration of Anderson School District One Bond Request: Mrs. Binninger let everyone know that there is a copy of the bond request in their folders along with information that District One provided showing what projects the bond would be funding and how it would increase the millage. The bond is not to exceed \$15 million.

Dr. Gary Burgess asked if the school board had already approved the bond unanimously?

Dr. Seth Young stated that it was a unanimous vote.

Dr. Vaughn Parfitt asked if this bond would exceed over 8%.

Mr. Travis stated that the bond will not exceed over 8%. If it did, they would have to submit a referendum for the people of District One to vote for it to pass.

Mr. Greg Balog asked if they are already operating under a bond?

Dr. Young stated yes, they are operating under four bonds. They are to reach maturity in 2027 and 2036.

Mrs. Binninger commented that just by looking at the ADM, District One has grown over eight hundred students in the last 10 years.

Dr. Vaughn Parfitt asked if they were supposed to vote since the bond was not exceeding 8%.

Mrs. Binninger stated that since the debt service millage will go up 14 mills, they must vote on the bond.

Dr. Gary Burgess made a motion to pass School District One's Bond request. Mr. Mark Williamson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

B. Anderson School District One Board Seat Vacancy: Mr. Mike Upton asked if the board would like to do the interviews during the Executive session or in open session. All the board members agreed to interview Mr. Gregg Hayden and Mr. Chris Karr individually during Executive session.

Executive Session:

A motion was made at 7:23 pm to move to Executive Session by Rev. Jason Dorriety and seconded by Mr. C. Nakia Davis. All board members approved unanimously.

Dr. Vaughn Parfitt made a motion to exit Executive Session at 7:59 pm and seconded by Mr. Greg Balog. All board members approved unanimously.

No action was taken during Executive Session, and it ended at 7:59 pm.

Action Items as Necessary from Executive Session: The board members voted for Mr. Gregg Hayden to be the new board member for Anderson School District One.

Announcements: Mrs. Binninger reminded everyone that Mental Health Counselor Nancy Allen will be retiring at the end of the school year. We will have a drop in retirement party on May 22nd from 2:00-4:00. All board members are invited to attend.

Meeting Date: The next Board meeting will be on Monday, May 19, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. by Mr. Mike Upton

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. C. Nakia Davis, Secretary of the Anderson County Board of Education.

This is a true and correct copy of notes taken at the meeting.