

Anderson County Board of Education
907 North Main Street, Suite 202, Anderson, South Carolina 29621
April 20, 2026

Dr. Gary Burgess, Vice Chairman, served as Chairman in place of Mr. Mike Upton for this evening's Board meeting.

Call to Order: Acting Chairman, Dr. Gary Burgess, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Dr. Gary Burgess 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. Gary Burgess, Dr. Vaughn Parfitt, Mr. Mark Williamson, Mr. Greg Balog, Mr. C. Nakia Davis by phone, Mr. Michael S. Upton by Zoom, and Mrs. Susan Binninger ex officio.

Board Members Absent: The following board members were absent: Mr. David Blanding, Rev. Jason Dorriety, and Dr. Doug Atkins.

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

Approval of Minutes: Dr. Parfitt made a motion to approve the March 16, 2026, meeting minutes and Mr. Balog seconded the motion. They were approved unanimously.

Recognition of Media and Patrons / Public Comment Period: Dr. Burgess welcomed Dr. Seth Young, Superintendent of Anderson School District One, Mrs. Kathy Hipp, Superintendent of Anderson School District Three, and Mr. Matthew Moore, Chief Financial Officer of Anderson School District Three, to this evening's board meeting.

Consideration of Anderson School District one Property Resolution: Dr. Seth Young, Superintendent of Anderson School District One, presented a property resolution regarding the sale of 0.331 acres located on Middleton Boulevard in Williamston. The property is being sold for \$26,480. Dr. Young explained that the district was previously unaware of its ownership of the parcel until a developer, while preparing to develop the property, discovered that he did not hold title. Upon further investigation, it was determined that Anderson School District One owned the land, and the developer subsequently inquired about purchasing it. Anderson School District One's Board voted to sell the property on March 24, 2026. Dr. Parfitt made a motion to approve the sale of the property. Mr. Balog seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Balog inquired about Anderson School District One's plans for the proceeds from the sale of the property. Dr. Young stated that the proceeds will be allocated to the district's capital funds to support building improvements and related projects.

Consideration of Anderson School District Three Bond Resolution: Mrs. Kathy Hipp, Superintendent of Anderson School District Three, presented the bond resolution for Crescent Middle School. The voters of Anderson School District Three approved the construction of Crescent Middle School during a referendum held on March 10, 2026. The resolution authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds of the school district in an amount not to exceed \$60,000,000, to be issued in one or more series, pending final issuance of the bonds. Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Dr. Parfitt seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Balog inquired about the planned use of Starr-Iva Middle School once the new Crescent Middle School is completed. Mrs. Hipp stated that some of the school spaces will be utilized for the community, such as the local recreation department using the gym. Some of the middle school spaces will need to be torn down within time.

Mr. Davis congratulated Mrs. Hipp and Anderson School District Three on the successful referendum and the development of a much-needed middle school.

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 103 students currently enrolled as of April 15, 2026. This time last year, there were 91 students enrolled. This is an increase of 12 students from last year. There are 9 students in the process of enrolling. On the back side of the report, reasons for students leaving the academy are identified.

Mr. Mark Williams inquired about the total student capacity of Renaissance Academy. Mrs. Binninger responded that she believes the capacity of Renaissance Academy is approximately 120 students.

B. Administrator's Report: Equalization Tax Follow-Up on Board Direction:

Mrs. Binninger reported that she met with the district superintendents to discuss the equalization tax option that the board would like to present to the legislative delegation in June 2026. She informed the board that superintendents from all five districts requested that the board postpone this process, as budgets for the 2026–2027 fiscal year are already underway. They expressed concern that proceeding at this time would not allow them to fully assess the potential financial impact on their districts.

Mrs. Binninger noted that District Three expressed support for the potential to provide tax relief, particularly for small businesses. Additionally, the superintendent of District Five recommended delaying the process to allow more time to explore a more equitable tax reduction approach for all districts.

Mr. Williamson commented that he had received feedback from District Five, which estimated an impact of approximately \$160,000 for this year's budget, noting that the amount could potentially increase. He asked Mrs. Binninger whether she believed the superintendents had a clear understanding of the proposal and its potential implications if implemented. Mrs. Binninger responded that greater clarity would come once specific figures are available. She indicated that a full understanding would likely require reviewing concrete data and finalized numbers.

Dr. Parfitt inquired whether there is a deadline for making a decision on this matter. Mrs. Binninger responded that a decision would need to be made by June in order for her to present the equalization proposal to the legislative delegation. She explained that the delegation would be responsible for increasing the equalization tax, after which the board would reduce the millage by a corresponding amount in July to ensure there is no net increase for taxpayers.

The board members agreed to revisit discussion of the equalization tax for the 2027–2028 fiscal year. School districts typically begin developing their budgets in October for the upcoming fiscal year. The board plans to review the equalization tax in August and September 2026, allowing districts sufficient time to evaluate the impact and prepare accordingly for the 2027–2028 budget cycle.

Mrs. Binninger presented the operating millage and value per mill for each district as of March 31, 2026. District One has an estimated value per mill of approximately \$178,000, with an operating millage of 174.05 mills. District Two's value per mill is \$51,544, with an operating millage of 202 mills. District Three reports a value per mill of \$41,006 and an operating millage of 190.5 mills. District Four's value per mill is \$110,686, with an operating millage of 164.25 mills. District Five has a value per mill of \$284,867 and an operating millage of 191 mills.

State Legislative Update:

Mrs. Binninger reported that the Senate is scheduled to take up the State budget this week, which includes a proposed teacher salary increase. The Senate is proposing to raise the starting teacher salary from \$48,500 to \$50,500. This proposal includes a \$150 million increase in state aid to classrooms. Additionally, the plan provides for a \$2,000 increase across all salary steps. Mrs. Binninger noted that this increase is intended to be state-funded.

Mrs. Binninger reported the State of South Carolina is considering a small business tax cut under House Bill 506 (2026). This legislation is intended to provide tax relief to small businesses by exempting the first \$10,000 of business personal property from taxation. The bill passed the House unanimously in February and is currently under consideration by the Senate Finance Committee. At this time, there is no state reimbursement associated with the proposed exemption. Mrs. Binninger noted that this is an item the board should monitor, as it may have potential implications for the districts.

C. Financial

1. Tax Collection YTD vs. Budget: Mrs. Binninger reported that, as of March 31, 2026, all five districts, Renaissance Academy, and the County Board have collected between 80% and 95% of their local revenue. She noted that collections are at or above the levels reported at the same time last year.

Mrs. Binninger reported that the Homestead Exemption funds are expected to be received soon, with distribution anticipated in April.

She also provided an update on Ad Valorem (local property tax) revenues, noting that collections to date range between 95% and 107% of the budgeted amounts.

2. Assessment Totals: Mrs. Binninger reviewed the county-wide assessment totals through March 2026, noting a per mill value of \$1,177,758,561, a decrease of \$3,496 since the end of February 2026. Mrs. Binninger presented a three-year comparison of the value of one mill for the month of March, reporting an increase of 7% from 2024 to 2025, it is a little less for this year at a 5% increase. We are continuing to see that increase year over year in property values.

3. Education Sales & Use Tax: Mrs. Binninger reported that \$3,279,523.78 in Education Sales & Use Tax was collected in February. Mrs. Binninger stated that this is an increase of approximately \$207,000 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 in March 2026. Mr. Mark Williamson a motion to approve. Mr. Greg Balog seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Unfinished Business: Dr. Burgess inquired whether Mrs. Binninger's salary for the 2026–2027 fiscal year had been established. Mrs. Binninger responded that the amount will be determined by the board in July or August 2026.

New Business: None

Announcements: None

Meeting Date: The next board meeting will be on Monday, May 18, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m. by Vice Chairman Dr. Gary Burgess

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.