

The Charleston County School District's Board of Trustees is considering several improvement initiatives that could result in significant changes as early as the 2020-21 school year. The following is a summary of the areas discussed at the Sept. 16 Committee of the Whole meeting. These initiatives are not final, and there will be the opportunity for parent and educator feedback prior to a final vote by the Board in either October or November.

The following is a summary of each of the major initiatives under consideration.

PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS ZONE

Charleston County School District's Board of Trustees is looking at a new approach to turnaround schools in which traditional improvement initiatives have been largely unsuccessful, despite educators' best efforts. The idea is to create a "Partnership Zone" of schools which have a history of under-performance or where enrollment is declining.

The Board is currently searching for successful, experienced, and qualified innovators to "partner" with the school district, and recently put out a Solicitation for Interest to seek applicants who could implement proven approaches in a small number of schools as early as the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. Schools discussed as "possibilities" for the Partnership Zone include: Chicora Elementary, Mary Ford Elementary, Hunley Park Elementary, Pepperhill Elementary, Pinehurst Elementary, North Charleston Elementary, Morningside Middle, North Charleston High, Stono Park Elementary, Memminger Elementary, Sanders-Clyde Elementary, Simmons-Pinckney Middle, and Burke High.

The final list of schools has not been determined, and partners have not been identified at this time. The Board has asked district staff to gather feedback from parents and educators prior to their making a final decision in the next couple of months. Parent and educator representatives will be involved in analyzing options for their school.

The Board emphasized that this is not an effort to create more charter schools or more choice schools. The schools selected would continue as neighborhood-zoned schools but would operate under a special contract with the district. The district is actively seeking educators, agencies or organizations with a proven track record of successful turnaround efforts. Through this new approach, waivers exempting the Partnership Schools from some requirements and regulations could give turnaround efforts a greater chance of success. Partners could have greater flexibility and decision-making authority, with a higher degree of accountability, to implement models that accelerate student growth and achievement.

The district has placed a "Solicitation For Interest" for potential partners, and more information is available on the district's website homepage (www.ccsdschools.com).

PARTIAL MAGNET SCHOOLS

A district committee has recommended the elimination of a majority of CCSD's partial magnet schools, beginning as early as the 2020-21 school year. However, the recommendation would "grandfather in" all students who currently attend partial magnets and would allow students living outside a school's attendance zone to use the district's transfer process to apply.

Alongside the recommendation to eliminate schools' partial magnet status, the committee said that changes should be made to neighborhood schools providing equal programs so students and parents would not have to leave their neighborhood schools to access programs like those currently available only in partial magnets.

The Board of Trustees has not taken a vote on the recommendation and has asked the district staff to get feedback from parents and educators prior to a final decision.

The following is a list of the recommended actions:

DISTRICT 2 PARTIAL MAGNETS

- James B. Edwards Elementary: Global Leadership partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; continue allocation to support program in place
- Sullivan's Island Elementary: Coastal Environment partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place; possibly rezone
- Laing Middle: STEM partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place; possibly rezone
- Jennie Moore Elementary: Creative Arts partial magnet -- *keep* as Districts 1-2 magnet with attendance zone for magnet as space allows

DISTRICT 4 PARTIAL MAGNETS

- North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary: Arts infused magnet -- *keep* as District 4 magnet with attendance zone and application for magnet seats as space allows
- Jerry Zucker Middle: Science partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place

DISTRICT 9 PARTIAL MAGNET

- Haut Gap Middle: Advanced Studies partial magnet -- *return* to true middle school (grades 6-8); support programs in place

DISTRICT 10 PARTIAL MAGNETS

- St. Andrew's Elementary: Math/Science partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place; possibly rezone
- West Ashley Middle: Advanced Studies partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place; possibly rezone
- C.E. Williams Middle: Creative and Scientific Arts partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place; possibly rezone

DISTRICT 20 PARTIAL MAGNETS

- Mitchell Elementary: Math/Science partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place
- Memminger Elementary: Global Leadership/IB partial magnet -- *eliminate* partial magnet status; support programs in place

DISTRICT 23 PARTIAL MAGNET

- E.B. Ellington Elementary: Advanced Studies partial magnet -- *Improve or eliminate* partial magnet status

CONSTITUENT MAGNETS

Additionally, some schools in all areas would continue as Constituent District magnets as follows:

- Districts 1 and 2: Jennie Moore Elementary and East Cooper Montessori Charter
- District 3: Murray-LaSaine Montessori
- District 4: North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary and Malcolm Hursey Montessori
- District 9: Edith Frierson Montessori
- District 10: Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary and Montessori Community School
- District 20: Buist Academy and James Simons Montessori
- District 23: E.B. Ellington Elementary Advanced Studies and Montessori Community School

FACILITY AND PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Charleston County School District's Board of Trustees received a list of possible facility and program changes that could be considered in future capital project plans. The Board has not taken a vote on the list of possible projects, and district staff was asked to gather feedback from parents and educators prior to their making a decision.

The projects presented as possibilities are:

DISTRICT 4

- Convert the current Mary Ford Elementary campus to a North Charleston Early Education Center serving students from the southern area of District 4 as early as 2020-21 school year. Mary Ford students in grades above early childhood would be rezoned to Meeting Street Burns and Chicora Elementary.
- Combine Lambs Elementary, Hunley Park Elementary, and W.B. Goodwin Elementary into a new school built on the Lambs campus. Either Hunley Park or Goodwin would then be converted into an Early Education Center.
- Build a new Ladson Elementary School and convert the current facility into an Early Education Center.
- Build a new middle school in North Charleston replacing the current Morningside Middle; consider middle school options for Meeting Street Elementary students

DISTRICT 20

- Rezone all Mitchell Elementary students to Memminger Elementary and Charleston Progressive Academy.
- Expand Buist Academy by adding one class per grade level. Additional seats would go to eligible D20 students and vacant seats would be distributed countywide by lottery with a designated percentage per attendance area. To accommodate the additional classes, move Buist Middle School (grades 6-8).
- Renovate the Mitchell Elementary campus to create a middle school to house: James Simons Middle grades 6-8 Montessori program; an International Baccalaureate program (Buist Academy grades 6-8); Charleston Development Academy's grades 6-8.
- Create an attendance zone for Charleston Progressive Academy in D20 with additional seats first available to D20 students, and then vacant seats would be distributed among other attendance areas.

DISTRICT 9

- Build a new elementary school on Johns Island to accommodate growth

DISTRICT 23

- Expand E.B. Ellington Elementary to allow all Minnie Hughes Elementary students to be relocated to Ellington.