

November 24, 2008

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Charleston County School District was held on Monday, November 24, 2008 with the following members of the Board present: Mrs. Toya Hampton-Green, Mrs. Mr. Gregg Meyers, Mr. Chris Collins, Mr. Chris Fraser, Mrs. Ruth Jordan, Mrs. Elizabeth Kandrac, Mr. Arthur Ravenel, Mr. Ray Toler and Dr. Nancy J. McGinley – Superintendent of Schools and Executive Secretary. Mrs. Ann Oplinger was absent. Staff members Mr. Michael Bobby, Dr. Doug Gepford, Mr. Bill Lewis, Dr. Brenda Nelson, Mr. John Emerson and Mr. Elliott Smalley were in attendance.

The news media were duly notified of the meeting and representatives were present.

Chairperson Green called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Meyers motioned, seconded by Mrs. Jordan to convene into Executive Session. The motion was unanimously approved.

II. CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 5:15 p.m. Mrs. Green called the meeting to order and led the group in a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. SPECIAL RECOGNITION

3.0: Special Recognition for November 24, 2008

The Board recognized the following schools for being awarded a total of \$65,000 in arts curricular grants including Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary, Brentwood Middle, Mary Ford Elementary, and Wando High.

The Board recognized outstanding teams and coaches from Stall High, James Island Charter, Wando High, and Academic Magnet High.

The Board recognized a student from School of the Arts - Colleen Brennan, a tenth grade Visual Arts for receiving the National Scholastic Art Award.

The Board recognized Mr. Robert Faircloth, owner of Kia Country; George Lockwood, president of CPM Federal Credit Union; and Olen Holsten, general manager of Sam's Club, for their generous donations to North Charleston High School.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

4.1: Superintendent's Report

Dr. McGinley applauded everyone that was recognized during the Special Recognition section of the meeting for the examples of excellence they are setting. Dr. McGinley spoke about other recent accomplishments such as groundbreaking at Ashley River Creative Arts and Whitesides Elementary; award-winning employees being recognized at the Superintendent's Breakfast; and parent, business and community leaders engaging in spirited conversations about maximizing resources, and the School Redesign process. Dr. McGinley said that all parents want and deserve choices, which is why the District launched a school choice initiative to empower schools and communities to develop "partial magnet" themes. Later during the meeting the announcement of five schools will mark a tremendous step toward broadening the portfolio of options for parents and is a testament to the hard work that is being done by school faculties to transform schools. She went on to state that parents need to know that if they choose CCSD, they will have multiple options and their children will learn in nurturing, diverse and world-class school environments that prepare them to compete and succeed in the 21st Century.

V. VISITORS, PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

5.1: Visitors, Public Communications

Mrs. Marzel Thomas expressed concerns about charter schools and the formula used to allocate funds to charter schools.

Mrs. Rabiah Harris, a teacher at Charleston Progressive Academy spoke about the school's accomplishments.

Ms. Robin Daisley, Master J'Quan, Mr. Joseph Bailey, Mr. John Cobb – Drayton Hall Principal, Ms. Wendy Smith, Ms. Mary Carmichael, and Mr. Park Dougherty addressed the board in support of Drayton Hall's charter application urging the Board to approve application.

Mr. Nelson Ohl and Ms. Liz King asked the Board to consider a new facility for Montessori Community School.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES/EXECUTIVE SESSION AGENDA ITEM

6.1: Open and Executive Session Minutes of November 10, 2008

Mr. Meyers motioned, seconded by Mrs. Jordan approval of the minutes of open session and executive session of November 10, 2008. The motion was approved 8-0.

6.2: Motions of Executive Session of November 24, 2008

The Board approved the following motions that were made in Executive Session on November 24, 2008:

- 1.1 Student Appeal Hearing - The Board identified a date for a student appeal hearing.
- 1.2 Teacher Appeal Hearing - The Board identified a date for a teacher appeal hearing.
- 1.3 Legal Briefing – The Board heard legal briefing in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- 1.4 The Board approved the recommendation to approve Change Order #001 in the amount of \$252,195 for North Charleston High School Project #5655. This project is funded by 2005-2009 Capital Improvement Program budget.
- 1.5 The Board discussed a personnel matter in Executive Session. No action was taken.

6.3: Financial Minutes of November 10, 2008

Mr. Meyers motioned, seconded by Mrs. Jordan approval of the financial minutes for November 10, 2008. The motion was approved 8-0.

VII: MANAGEMENT REPORT

7.1: Financial Reports – General Operating Funds and Capital

Mr. Michael Bobby briefed the Board on Financial Reports: General Operating Funds and Capital Funds. In reference to the General Operating Funds, Mr. Bobby pointed out that further reductions were anticipated early in 2009. Also in regards to Capital Funds, Mr. Bobby said the District would have funds to compete the 2005-2006 building program.

VIII: CHARLESTON ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE UPDATE

8.1 Neighborhood Planning Team Update

Dr. Brenda Nelson presented information regarding Neighborhood Planning Teams. As part of its School Choice Initiative launched in January, the Charleston County School District awarded partial magnet status—empowering schools to create new themes and disciplines that will serve students within their attendance zones and beyond—to five schools. The recipients of the 2009-2010 Neighborhood Planning Team partial magnet grants were as follows:

- District 2 – Laing Middle School – Science and Technology. Their business partner is the College of Charleston.
- District 9 – Haut Gap Middle School – Advanced Student Program. Their business partner is the College of Charleston.
- District 4 – Chicora Elementary – Communication theme. Their business partner is the College of Charleston.
- District 20 – Memminger Elementary – Global Studies theme. The business partner is the College of Charleston.
- District 20 – Mitchell Elementary – Math and Science theme. Their business partner is MUSC.

8.2: Board Committee Reports

- A. Finance and Audit Committee – On behalf of the Finance and Audit Committee, Mr. Fraser said the audit of June 2008 will be presented to the Board on December 8, 2008.
- B. Mrs. Green stated that the Policy Committee will be chaired by Mrs. Jordan.

8.3: School Board Vision Discussion

Mrs. Green announced that this new agenda item will allow Board members to discuss new issues faced by the Board. She suggested Board Goals be identified to implement success and academics in the district. Goals identified will be recorded and revisited throughout the year. The Board shared their thoughts on visions for the Board as follows:

- Mrs. Kandrac - Increased involvement in Schools (Superintendent and Board)
- Mr. Collins - Closing the Achievement Gap in Math and English, Creation of Career Centered schools for non college-bound student
- Mrs. Green - Creation of policy to address the achievement gap, Board Evaluation and Data Analysis, addressing the Achievement Gap
- Mrs. Jordan - Creation of policy to staff low-performing schools with high quality, effective teachers/principals, charging each school with formulating a plan for closing the achievement gap, and addressing needs at priority schools
- Mr. Meyers - Evaluation of results and redirecting of activities, reducing time spent on agenda items with approval of items in accordance to state law and/or policies
- Mr. Ravenel - Parental Involvement
- Mr. Toler - Fairness to all employees

IX. POTENTIAL CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- 9.1 Second Reading of Board Policy IJOC – School Volunteers - Mr. Meyers motioned, seconded by Mr. Ravenel approval of the second reading of Board Policy IJOC School Volunteers, with necessary revisions—removal of the words “with a minor”. The motion was approved 8-0.
- 9.2 Center of Arts & Academics – Project #5643/5779 – Approval of Right of Way - Mr. Meyers motioned, seconded by Mrs. Jordan approval of the recommendation to approve the right of way easement for the Charles Blanchard Construction Corporation to install a gravel driveway on the Center of Arts and Academic Campus property.
- 9.3 The Summit Program at Daniel Jenkins Academy (11th and 12th grades) - The Board received information on the Summit Program at Daniel Jenkins Academy. The program will begin December 1st with twelve students to be accommodated in morning or afternoon programs. A full time guidance counselor will help students get their high school diplomas. There will be four sessions at 8:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Two teachers will be in classroom to assist students will self-paced program. APEX software will be used. Students may attend one or all four sessions.
- 9.4 Drayton Hall Charter Elementary School Charter Application – Mrs. Green invited Drayton Hall Elementary Principal Mr. Cobb and other Drayton Hall Charter spokesperson to address the Board about the charter application. Mr. Cobb invited Mr. Bill Mosier and Mr. Park Dougherty. Mr. Cobb addressed the Board about concerns identified by the districts’ General Counsel, John Emerson.

Mr. Cobb addressed each of the following concerns—

- racial balance – to be addressed
- Lack of innovation – the school will offer foreign language from K3, music for 4th and 5th grades, and lower class size.
- Timeliness of submission of application – CCSD received the application the day after it was submitted to the state department.
- Funding – the school is not asking for extra funds, just asking for funding for the 700+ students served.

Mr. Cobb went on to say that the school has a solid staff and parental support. The school's scores went down because of decreased funding.

Mr. Mosier addressed concerns about funding indicating that the charter funding formula would be used.

Mr. John Emerson, General Counsel for the District, stated that while staff favors school choice, the District recommends denial of the application. The District recommendation is a result of the current economic crisis. Approval of the charter for Drayton Hall Elementary would result in an additional \$2 million. All conversion schools would have to accept students and sibling of students currently there. Then, the school enrollment is open to a lottery, allow students from across the county to enroll there, resulting in neighboring schools, which are near capacity, having to bus kids to other schools. In keeping in the spirit of the charter law, innovative does not mean adding music and foreign language.

Dr. McGinley also stated the District's position on the charter application indicating that the adverse impact is a serious concern that could not be ignored, especially when some schools have to be closed. Drayton Hall would get an additional \$2 million if the charter was approved. The impact would also hurt the community. While existing students and siblings would be grandfathered in, new residents will not have anymore rights than those who live in other districts. This would result in transporting students to other schools. In reference to innovation, Dr. McGinley said schools were asked to apply for the Neighborhood Planning Team grants. Drayton Hall Elementary did not apply. Dr. McGinley said Drayton Hall will continue practices in CCSD or things already in place and that innovation does not exist. There are no obvious changes to enhance portfolio of options.

Mr. Cobb responded to stated that he will continue what is successful and add to it. In reference to new students coming into the district, Mr. Cobb said staff can't say that choice is only good when it is offered by the district.

Mr. David Pagernini, attorney for the charter school, said this is the third time the district has fought a charter school. He went on to say that permitting them to address the Board at tonight's meeting does not meet the requirement for a hearing and no information was provided to the charter attorney in advance. Mr. Pagernini referenced the statute about adverse impact indicating that it was "not met".

Mr. Ravenel said after reading in his board packet that the charter would be denied he spoke to some people who were not aware of the recommendation. He went on to state that the reason the district doesn't like charter schools is because they assume independence and funding as a result of General Legislation. He said he wasn't sure why Drayton Hall gets the lowest funding and went on to share his efforts in trying to keep the district from killing the Charleston Science and Math Charter School. That school is now doing great. Mr. Ravenel suggested that Senator McConnell and Representative Harrell who represent Drayton Hall Elementary will possibly draft legislation in support of the charter. In closing, he said he hoped to get support to approve the charter to avoid going to the Supreme Court and Local Circuit Court to resolve charter issues in the district.

Mr. Meyers said the law allows the board to evaluate charter schools annually and suggested if goals not met, schools should be evaluated. Mr. Meyers said he would support the charter if Mr. Cobb would bet his goal of 88% or higher mastery of scores. Mr. Cobb said he would.

In reference to funding, Mr. Meyers said while the funding formula penalizes the district, the state continues to cut funding for the district. James Island Charter High School puts a lot of their money in the bank when they are not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress. These funds should be used to educate. Conversion charters are spending more. However, the results are not any better. Converted charters are making less of an impact. State law says charter schools must meet or exceed state standards.

Mrs. Green said it was unconscious-able to pass a budget asking the superintendent to evaluate school redesign and approve a charter school that would cost an additional \$2 million. What if the board had to close a school or combine another school for a school that only wants music or foreign language? Many neighborhood students won't be able to enroll because of the lottery. The additional \$2 million allocated to Drayton Hall would cause other schools to go lacking.

Mr. Fraser said he was glad to see that a lawsuit was filed to clarify Act 189. He mentioned the \$8 million shortfall, additional cuts in January, and said its all about funding.

Mr. Emerson said the lawsuit would ask the court to review Act 189. That act allows charter schools free rent and anything other schools are entitled to.

Following the discussion, Mrs. Jordan motioned, seconded by Mr. Fraser denial of the Drayton Hall Elementary Charter Application. The motion failed 4-4 (Kandrac, Meyers, Ravenel and Toler opposed).

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, at 8:00 p.m., Mr. Meyers motioned, seconded by Mrs. Jordan to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by consensus.

Approved:

Nancy J. McGinley, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools