

Minutes

8:00 a.m., March 29, 2023 Planning Meeting

Lancaster County School District Board of Trustees Planning Meeting

In attendance

Board members present-	Eddie Boykin, Casey Cato, Courtney Green, Tyrom Faulkner (Secretary), Margaret Gamble, Brad Small (Chair), and Melvin Stroble (Vice-Chair)
Board members absent-	None
District personnel-	Linda Blackwell (Elementary Director), Rachel Bradley (Superintendent's Assistant), Michelle Craig (Communications Specialist), Butch Dutton (Secondary Director), Lindsey Marino (Student Services Director), Jatana Norris (Chief Financial Officer), Jonathan Phipps (Superintendent), Lydia Quinn (COO), David Small (Facilities Director), Quinton Thomas (LearnTV), Bryan Vaughn (Safety & Communications Director)
Guests-	Scott Price (SCSBA Executive Director)
Press-	None
Citizens-	1

Open session

Call to order and invocation- BABA	At 8:00 a.m., the chair called the meeting to order. Mr. Faulkner gave the <u>INVOCATION</u> .
Notice to media- BCBB	In accordance with the SC Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, Cable 2, The Herald, the Kershaw News Era, The Lancaster News, WBTV, WRHM and WSOC were notified of the time, date, place and agenda of this meeting.
Welcome -	Chairman Small welcomed the board, district administration, and guests to the meeting.
Superintendent Search -	Chairman Small introduced Mr. Price who informed the board about the process of how a superintendent search works if they choose to work with SCSBA. Mr. Price explained the cost would be between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Mr. Price and the Board discussed how many potential applicants there might be, the benefits and drawbacks of looking nationally for candidates or staying focused on the southeast area, and the benefits of having the outgoing superintendent giving the Board time to search for a replacement without rushing to fill the vacant position. Mr. Price and the Board also discussed the process of gathering district and community input, setting up focus group meetings, the interview and community meeting process for the candidates, and the overall timeline for the

search. The board discussed the differences in hiring an attorney, an independent consultant, or SCSBA to help conduct the superintendent search. Chairman Small requested that board members have suggestions for attorneys or consultants to use to please send them to him by April 10th along with their input on the timeline for beginning the superintendent search.

Graduation Times and Tickets -

Chairman Small recognized Mr. Dutton who spoke to the Board about graduation dates, times, and tickets. The board and Mr. Dutton discussed the option for unlimited tickets if graduation is outside and the limit for tickets if inclement weather requires graduation to be moved inside. The board also discussed the clear bag policy, using metal detectors, and having EMS on site in regards to graduation.

LCSD Funding Sources 101 -

Chairman Small recognized Ms. Norris who gave a presentation explaining the local, state, and federal funding the district receives. Ms. Norris also explained the process of how and when the funds are given to the district and then how expenditures are reported back to the state and federal entities. Ms. Norris also informed the board about which funds can be carried over into the next fiscal year and which funds must be spent during the fiscal year they were received in.

Capital Request/Funds -

Chairman Small recognized Ms. Norris who informed the board that the Finance Department and Facilities Department went through all of the remaining capital resources including the last bond referendum. Ms. Norris explained that there is encumbered funds from the bond that still encumbered because of billing issues dealing with the new Indian Land High School. Ms. Norris stated there is an option where these funds can be unencumbered and used to complete other projects noted in the 2016 bond with the knowledge that once the issue is resolved with the new Indian land High School, the district may have to pay the remaining cost at a later date with general obligation bond funds. Ms. Norris also spoke to the board about the request to upgrade the audio and visual technology components in the board room for improving the quality of livestreaming the board meetings. Ms. Norris explained that there is money that can be used from the 2019-2020 general obligation bond.

**Middle & High School Athletics
Budget Report and Principal
Capital Requests -**

Chairman Small recognized Ms. Norris who presented the board with the latest Athletic Activities Financial Report which is from July 2021 through June 2022. Ms. Norris informed the board that the Finance Department typically will work on the next report in June and it is distributed to the board by October. Ms. Norris and Ms. Quinn went over the capital requests made by principals throughout the district. Mr. Vaughn discussed the principal request for more radios at schools. Mr. Vaughn explained that funds for radios has been depleted and that there

**Bond Reviews/Needs and
Funding Impact -**

is a need for exchanging the current systems for new radios that can work with the new construction at various schools. Mr. Vaughn also discussed the current camera system at the schools and what needs to be done to get new camera systems installed at every school. Chairman Small mentioned to the board that the \$1.1 million pupil fund that Ms. Norris informed the board about previously could be used to help complete some of the principals' capital requests.

Chairman Small recognized Ms. Norris who reviewed the bond scenarios presented to the board previously by Mr. Damron from Compass Municipal Advisors, LLC. Ms. Norris reminded the board that the three bond referendum options do not impact debt-service millage at all. She also informed the board that these options have no funding impact to the taxpayers. Ms. Norris explained that the factors used for the three options are meant to ensure there is no change to the 65 mils and no impact to taxpayers, however, if the board chooses to change the parameters and increase the bond amount and millage then there might be an impact on taxpayers. Ms. Norris explained to the board that if the millage decreases from 65 mils that the district will not be able to continue to function and educate children in Lancaster County. Mr. Stroble clarified with Ms. Norris that the 65 mills is the current baseline for the district to function, run schools, and educate students. If the millage decreases it would affect how much the district could borrow in general obligation bonds. Mr. Stroble asked about whether the district's growth numbers matched the county's data on upcoming growth in the next decade and does that data have an impact on the amount of proposed in the bond referendum. Dr. Phipps stated that in a previous board planning session the board and district leadership went over the updated enrollment study and other data to get a clear picture on what is needed for the next few years within the district. Ms. Quinn stated that Mr. Miller from Numerix, LLC who completed the enrollment study, worked with the city and the county to gather their data and incorporate their projections into the study. Chairman Small polled the board on their current opinion on the possibility of a bond referendum. Ms. Gamble stated that she is for the bond if an updated gym with accessible seating is included in the referendum plan. Ms. Cato stated that she was in favor of a bond as long as taxes are not increased. Mr. Boykin stated he is in favor of the bond because he believes it will benefit the whole county. Ms. Green stated that as a board member she is in favor of the bond but that the community she represents does not want a bond because of trust issues with the district. Mr. Faulkner stated that he is in favor of a bond because he sees the needs within the county and the benefits of the referendum. Mr. Stroble stated that he is supportive of a bond but that the timing of a bond is important and there needs to be more discussion and input on planning

for growth in the Indian Land area. Chairman Small stated he is in favor of the bond because he sees the needs across the county for space and equity for students in every school no matter the community. The board discussed the possible timeline of the bond. Chairman Small asked the board to think about options regarding the timeline of a bond and what timeline might be better received in their communities. Mr. Small briefly updated the board about where the newly purchased mobile units will be placed at Indian Land schools, how much they cost to purchase and install, the limitations on land available to continue to add mobile units to accommodate students, and the capacity issues that will occur in the common areas of the schools.

Mental Health (Students & Staff) -

Chairman Small recognized Dr. Marino and Ms. Quinn who presented information to the board regarding student and employee mental health assistance and programs. Dr. Marino informed the board that the district currently has two district -level school social workers, one district-level behavioral interventionist, and one district-level licensed counselor, that work throughout the schools to help students as much as possible. Dr. Marino stated that it would be a big help to add additional district-level staff that could support schools, particularly another behavioral interventionist would be very useful. Dr. Marino stated that there are two outside agencies that are used to provide student counseling services, Catawba Mental Health and Stepping Stones Group. Stepping Stones Group sees only Medicaid students and the district currently has 7 contracted mental health therapists from the group working with 181 students. Dr. Marino spoke about the stigma around mental health and how that can prevent students from seeking the help they need. She stated that educating students on mental health and the resources they can use will hopefully allow students to feel better about asking for help. Dr. Marino also mentioned that educating teachers, staff, and parents to recognize signs for different issues can be very helpful. Ms. Quinn went over the employee assistance programs available to help provide mental health services to employees of the district. Ms. Quinn mentioned Lancaster Counseling Services works with the district to provide voluntary counseling services as well as mandatory counseling services to employees when needed. The information on employee assistance programs is shared in new personnel orientation and in the employee handbook. Ms. Quinn informed the board that the new program implemented last year from Colonial Life, which is an online employee assistance program, has helped provide online counseling services, substance abuse assistance, child care assistance, financial planning, etc. Ms. Quinn informed the board about the PEBA Meru Health program that has also been implemented to assist employees with mental health services. Chairman Small asked that the board and district leadership bring any needs regarding mental health

Foreign Exchange Questions -

programs, staff, or services to the board so that they can help ensure the district is providing students and employees with the mental health assistance they need.

Chairman Small recognized Ms. Quinn who explained the answers to the foreign exchange questions board members had. The deadline for accepting applications for the fall semester is July 8th. The district does accept Spring semester students and the deadline for those applications is October 1st. The number of exchange students per school depends on the space available. The district will begin accepting applications March 1 each year. The district does not accept 15 year old students.

Ms. Quinn and Mr. Dutton informed the board that the earlier the applications for foreign exchange students are sent in the better because there is a process and discussion regarding what graduation requirements the student may need and whether they can be accommodated by the district. Mr. Dutton also explained that foreign exchange students would have to meet the South Carolina graduation requirements to receive a diploma from Lancaster County School District and participate in graduation. Ms. Quinn informed the board that foreign exchange students could affect the class ranking if they meet the South Carolina graduation requirements and could also affect sports team selection if they choose to try out for a sport at the school they are attending.

Building and Athletic Facility Rental Fees -

Chairman Small recognized Mr. Small who presented information on building and athletic facility rentals within the district. Mr. Small also spoke about the current facility rental form and that he would gather data from surrounding districts to help provide some insight on what to update on the form and then would bring it back to the board during the May board meeting. The board discussed the cost of renting a facility within the district and reviewing the operational costs in regards to possibly reducing the rental cost.

Nurse/Athletic Trainer Bonus -

Chairman Small recognized Ms. Quinn who clarified for the board that Nurses are considered classified employees and that is why they received the \$750 bonus instead of the \$1,000 bonus given to certified employees. Nurses also received a \$2,500 bonus from the state. During the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses did receive a \$1,000 bonus for working overtime. Ms. Quinn explained that the athletic trainers are contracted employees and therefore did not receive a bonus from the district. The district did not give any bonuses to contracted employees because they are not considered employees of the district. Some athletic trainers also teach classes so they are considered part-time employees as well as contracted employees through MUSC. The board discussed possibly giving these hybrid employees a bonus for their part-time work at the district as teachers.

Work Sessions -

Chairman Small addressed the board and discussed the option of having more work sessions in between regular monthly board meetings as a way to prevent the regular meeting from running so late. These work sessions would allow board members to receive important information and ask questions regarding specific topics that could be discussed outside of a regular monthly meeting. Chairman Small suggested the meetings begin between 5:00p.m. and 6:00p.m. and only last until 8:00p.m. at the latest. The board discussed the requirement of having a public input portion at any meeting the board conducts and how that process works. The board also discussed different variations of what the work sessions might consist of and how they would be structured.

Potential Board Committees -

Chairman Small recognized Mr. Stroble who spoke about creating two board subcommittees, one for the bond referendum and one for the superintendent search. Mr. Stroble discussed the importance of having the subcommittees and beginning the processes for both the bond referendum and the superintendent search. Chairman Small asked the board to think about which subcommittee they would like to join and to let him know by the April regular board meeting.

Community Engagement Draft Policy -

Chairman Small recognized Mr. Stroble who spoke about the draft of the community engagement board policy that was suggested to be created and approved to help provide accountability for the board regarding the community meetings and communication between the district, board, and community. Chairman Small asked that the board look over the draft and provide feedback.

Succession Planning -

Chairman Small stated that since Dr. Phipps presented the board with his retirement letter on March 21st there was not a need to discuss succession planning.

**Adjournment-
BCBF**

With no other business before the board, the chair adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: _____

Tyrom Faulkner, Secretary

Brad Small, Chair