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Monday, August 11, 2025
Regular Board Meeting - 6:30 pm

The Anderson School District Three Board of Trustees met in regular session on Monday, August 11, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Boardroom of the Administrative Offices located in Iva, South Carolina. Those present were Mr. Watt (Chairman), Mrs. Arnold (Secretary), Mr. Holbrook, Mr. Bouknight, and Mr. Burdette.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (d), as amended, the following were notified: *The Anderson Independent*, *The Greenville News*, Gordon Dill, and WSPA TV Channel 7.

Mr. Watt called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an invocation.

AGENDA & MINUTES

Mr. Bouknight moved, Mr. Burdette seconded, and the motion carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Mr. Burdette moved, Mrs. Arnold seconded, and the motion passed 5-0 to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as presented.

COMMENDATIONS

Mrs. Hipp welcomed parents, students, and coaches for a special recognition of 2025 spring sports athletes who earned All-State honors. The following students were recognized:

Track & Field – Amiri Acker (Region 3-3A MVP; All-State in 100m, 200m, 4x100m, 4x400m), Tron Paul (All-State in 4x100m, 4x400m; State Championship ring recipient), Clemens [last name] (All-State in 4x100m), Justin Davis (All-State in 4x400m), Darius Latimer (All-State in 4x100m), and Keontae Parks (All-State in 4x400m).

Baseball – Trip Cook (All-State; North/South All-Star; Region 3-3A Player of the Year; committed to Lee University).

Softball – Kaylee Rouse (All-State) and Remy Sherriff (All-State; North/South All-Star).

The Board congratulated all honorees and expressed appreciation to the families in attendance for their support.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

There were no Citizens' Comments this evening.

REPORTS

Financial Reports

General Fund – Mr. Matthew Moore, Chief Financial Officer, reported that through the end of July, revenues exceeded expenditures by approximately $383,264. He noted that it is very early in the fiscal year, and current figures are consistent with historical patterns from prior years, which typically show a positive balance of just under $400,000 after the first month.

He reminded the Board of the goal to add $520,725 to the Fund Balance for FY 2024-25 to maintain the Board's 25% reserve target for the following year's expenditures. Based on current data, he anticipates meeting and potentially exceeding that target, which should allow for a Building Fund transfer request for the board.

Mr. Moore reported an unexpected windfall of approximately $400,000 in delinquent property tax revenue resulting from the conclusion of a longstanding lawsuit in which Colonial Pipeline and Transcontinental Pipeline had sought exemption from property taxes. The companies lost their appeal, were billed for six to seven years of back taxes, and remitted payment in late July/early August. Because the funds were received within the 45-day accrual period, they will be booked back to FY 2024-25, increasing the amount available for transfer.

Mr. Holbrook asked whether the land purchased for the new middle school property was paid from the General Fund or the Sales Tax. Mr. Moore confirmed it was paid from sales tax proceeds.

Mrs. Arnold inquired if this is typically the time of year when Building Fund transfers are made. Mr. Moore responded that such transfers had never occurred before September and, in some years, had been done in October, but the goal is to complete the transfer in September before the auditors arrive.

Sales Tax – Sales tax collections remain strong. June collections totaled $300,342.29, the sixth-largest on record, and July collections totaled $307,683.26, the fourth-largest on record. FY 2024-25 collections grew 9.56% compared to FY 2023-24. Mr. Moore also noted that the Department of Revenue's sales tax audit found the District in full compliance. The report is provided in the appendix.

Title Funds – Mrs. Hipp interjected and asked Mr. Moore to speak on Title Funds that were previously frozen. Mr. Moore stated that the State Department of Education has released Title funds previously frozen at the federal level. The State Department of Education letter confirming this was provided in the Appendix Items.

Operations Report

Dr. David Nixon, Deputy Superintendent, provided a detailed update on summer maintenance projects across the District, beginning by commending Bones Jarrard, Blake Whitefield, and Brent Powell, as well as administrators and custodial staff, for their cooperation and hard work.

The underpinning of the Homeless Resource Building at Iva Elementary was completed over the previous weekend, significantly improving its appearance and student safety. Dr. Nixon continued by explaining that the projects lacking completion included the replacement of some interior and exterior doors. These have been on back order due to the doors being custom-cut. Upon completion, the projects will be completed in the afternoon and on the weekends, outside of school hours. The sewer line project down Hwy 184 has also not been completed due to the lack of documentation on the ownership of this area of sewer. It was eventually found that the portion of the sewer was jointly installed by the Town of Iva and the district. The Town of Iva is in the process of taking ownership and will be responsible following these scheduled repairs. Permits have been submitted, and final permits are awaiting approval from the SCDOT to close the road for repair.

Iva Elementary - Old, stained carpet was replaced with LVT flooring in the Media Center, creating a cleaner, brighter space.

In addition, safety and security enhancements were made at Iva Elementary by clearing a wooded area on the corner of the property that had been overgrown and contained debris such as old appliances and construction materials. This area has presented both a security concern and a safety hazard; it is now cleared and will be regularly maintained. Dr. Nixon mentioned how much better this area of the property looked, especially from Antreville Hwy. It will be sprayed and maintained to ensure it stays clear.

Starr Elementary - Dr. Nixon mentioned the Adult Education portable at Starr Elementary has not yet received underpinning, but will be completed soon. Door replacements at this location will also be completed on nights and weekends once they are ready for installation. 17 Classrooms, the gym, and the cafeteria were all repainted this summer. The gym had the most dramatic impact from a new coat of paint, with the color scheme mimicking the Crescent High School gym. Mr. McCullough was involved with the project and worked with Mrs. Hatcher to select designs. The original exterior letters to the building were also removed, powder-coated gold, and reinstalled.

Starr-Iva Middle School - Erosion issues around the car rider entrance were addressed by replacing collapsed drainage lines and retaining walls, improving safety and appearance. The school also received interior paint touch-ups.

Crescent High School - The door project has also been delayed at Crescent. Major electrical and roofing projects were completed at the school. The entire roof on the wing closest to Hwy 81 has been replaced, and an electrical switch that was original to the construction was replaced in the oldest portion of the building. The roofing project shores up the last place in the building with active leaks. Old carpet in the media center, administrative offices, and front offices was replaced with LVT flooring. Partitions were removed in a former computer lab, and the flooring was replaced to make the classroom more usable for instructional needs. Dr. Nixon updated the board on the band tower relocation project. Due to the band growing exponentially, the tower will be relocated to the edge of the gym parking lot. This will only require a reduction of two parking spaces, but will provide the band with adequate space to mimic a football field.

District Office - The transportation office also underwent improvements, such as replacing worn carpet with LVT and creating a more welcoming space for bus drivers.

Dr. Nixon expressed appreciation for the work of Lloyd Roofing, which completed the roof projects on time and with professionalism.

Mr. Watt asked who worked on tiling and flooring in the schools. Dr. Nixon referred to Mr. Moore, who confirmed that Bowers Flooring won the contract on all flooring projects this summer.

Dr. Nixon thanked the board for continuing the PAYGO funds that the board has allocated.

He noted that Emergency Personnel Tours are scheduled for September 3, 2025, and invited the board to attend.

Special Education Report

Mrs. Burton presented an overview of the District's special education program, noting that Anderson 3 currently serves 405 students, representing just over 13% of the total student population. The largest primary disability category is Specific Learning Disabilities at 48%, followed by Autism at 14%, Speech-Language Impairment at 13%, and Other Health Impairment at 13%, with the remaining 12% distributed among multiple low-incidence categories such as vision impairment, deaf/hard of hearing, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities, developmental delay, multiple disabilities, emotional disabilities, and orthopedic impairment.

She reviewed enrollment trends, showing that in 2020 the District served 348 students, dipped slightly in 2021 following the pandemic, and has steadily increased each year—394 in 2023 and 400 in 2024—with the largest area of growth coming from students on the autism spectrum.

Anderson 3 received a “Meets Requirements” designation from the State Department of Education in its LEA Determination, placing it among only 29 of the 83 districts statewide to earn that status. The compliance score was 18 out of 18, covering timely/accurate reporting, fiscal risk, postsecondary transition planning, timely correction of any noncompliance, early childhood transitions, suspension rates, and disproportionality. The performance score was 19 out of 22, for 37 out of 40 (92.5%), exceeding state targets in graduation rate, 4th grade ELA and Math, 8th grade Math, least restrictive environment placement, early childhood placement, suspension rates, and career readiness. The only area not meeting the state target was 8th-grade ELA for students with disabilities.

Challenges for the department include increasing behavioral and medical needs, particularly among students with autism spectrum disorder; compliance pressures for evaluations and IEP timelines amid shortages of school psychologists and speech-language pathologists; and rising costs for specialized services, assistive technology, and private placements.

Mr. Burdette asked whether contracted services for psychologists and therapists are necessary because the need is too small to justify a full-time position or because of hiring difficulties. Mrs. Burton replied that it is due to the scarcity of qualified applicants, compounded by the lack of local university programs in school psychology or speech-language pathology and the competition from the medical sector for speech-language pathologists.

Mr. Burdette asked if other districts in Anderson County face similar shortages. Mrs. Burton confirmed that they do, noting that all districts in the upstate work with the same vendor, “Little Johnny,” for contracted school psychologist services, with larger districts sometimes covering most of their needs internally but still contracting for remaining positions.

Mr. Watt asked if the current special education enrollment is an all-time high or average. Mrs. Burton stated it is the highest in recent history, up from about 350 pre-pandemic, with steady growth of roughly 10 students per year, especially in autism.

Mr. Watt asked whether the increase in services could be tied to earlier needs identification. Mrs. Burton explained that children are referred to therapies earlier, which flows into earlier school identification. Still, waiting lists for early intervention are now two to three years long, so some children with significant needs enter school without having received those services.

Mrs. Arnold asked about the average caseload for case managers. Mrs. Burton said the state guideline for resource settings is 33:1, and current ratios are close to that—about 30–32:1 at the middle school—with self-contained settings capped at 15:1; all sites are within those limits.

Mrs. Arnold asked if the District has considered “grow your own” programs for high-need positions like school psychologists, where staff are sent back to school in exchange for a work commitment. Mrs. Burton responded that SC CREATE does offer such opportunities. Still, participation requires the District to sign a commitment to employ the person for three years after completion, which can be challenging if multiple candidates are enrolled simultaneously.

She noted that one staff member, Sunny Beringer at Iva Elementary, is in the school psychology program, and the District has signed the commitment for her.

Mrs. Hipp added that superintendents in Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties have advocated for Anderson University to start a speech-language pathology program, which could help address the shortage. Still, no progress has been made to date.

Mr. Watt commended Mrs. Burton for the dedicated work of the Anderson 3 Special Education Team.

Action Items

Mrs. Burton recommended approval of a new multi-age classroom course code for the elementary program at Flat Rock Elementary, serving students with profound needs. This code will streamline scheduling by replacing the need to register each student in multiple separate course codes, allowing the program to be more accurately reflected in PowerSchool.

Mr. Bouknight moved, Mrs. Arnold seconded, and the motion carried 5-0 to approve the new course code.

Mr. Holbrook moved, Mrs. Arnold seconded, and the motion carried 5 - 0 to move into Executive Session for discussion of personnel and contractual matters.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Holbook moved, Mr. Bouknight seconded, and the motion carried 5 - 0 to come out of Executive Session.

Upon coming out of Executive Session, the following actions were taken:

> *Mr. Holbrook moved, Mr. Burdette seconded, and the motion passed 5 - 0 to approve the employment of Candidates A & B as presented for the 2025-2026 school year, as recommended by the Superintendent.*

ADJOURN

Mrs. Arnold moved, Mr. Burdette seconded, and the motion passed 5 - 0 to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

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Chairman Secretary