

Palmetto Unified School District
South Carolina Department of Corrections
Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, April 4, 2024

Mission Statement: Palmetto Unified School District and South Carolina Department of Corrections will provide students with relevant courses, highly effective career related vocational programs and necessary life skills to make a positive impact in society.

Vision: Palmetto Unified School District educates and empowers participants to become employable, self-sufficient citizens.

Board of Trustee Members Present:

Mr. Jamie Quinn, Chairman

Dr. Mary Elaine Richardson

Mr. Michael Sumter, Vice Chairman

Ms. Charmeka Childs

Mr. Wade Keith Coones

Dr. James Ann Sheley

Mr. Tyson Grinstead

Rev. Dr. Robert Reid

PUSD District Office Staff Present:

Dr. Cynthia Cash-Greene, Superintendent

Mr. Russell Salter, IT

Dr. Beverly Holiday, Director Adult Education

Mr. Josh Brade, IT

Mr. Rodney Zimmerman, Director of Curriculum

Dr. Relus Lucear

Dr. Charlette Taylor

Ms. Tamika McDuffie

Dr. Matt Thompson, Director of CTE

Dr. Emanuel Alston

Chairman Sumter called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM; conducted a roll call and confirmed that the meeting was publicly posted.

Pledge of Allegiance – led by Chairman Sumter

Invocation - by Board member Rev. Reid

Chairman Sumter – requested approval of the minutes from October 5, 2023.

Old Business - Chairman Sumter requested a motion to approve or decline the minutes. Mr. Coon moved to approve, and Rev. Reid motioned to seconded. Are there any corrections additions? If not, all in favor, aye, all opposed?

New Business. Budget updates were provided by Ms. Glover. It was indicated that the district was still in the black.

Rev. Reid stated that “We don’t have a lot, but I do not see red numbers.”

Yes, Sir. I mean the black. Yes, Sir. Great, great news. I like it like that. You’ve got red numbers. then I get worried. **Ms.**

Glover - Are there any questions? **Mr. Sumter** – Now let’s have the Superintendents’ report. **Superintendent** - Good morning. Chairman Sumter, Vice chair, and the remaining board members and those who are with us via teams. Happy New Year to you and thank you for joining us for our first meeting for the 2024 school year. **Superintendent** - As indicated in your email, we were approved to present at the annual school Board’s Conference in Hilton Head on February 16th. Two Board members have been approved to attend and those requests to attend were made earlier. Just to let you know, our goal is to bring about awareness of policies and practices contributing to the school to prison pipeline and because we're able to see it on this end, we wanted to share that information with schools at the School

Boards Association to let them know that there are some policies that are in place that do impact or do support the school to prison pipeline.

The prison pipeline starts as early as elementary school. Our objectives are: to understand the education environment for the incarcerated; the impact of isolation and that the removal from families, communities and socialization activities supports the prison pipeline; help the board to understand how the schools, communities and faith-based organization interact and collaborate to decrease prison pipeline.

Rev. Reid – Superintendent, Which day is scheduled for the presentation? The 16th? **Superintendent** - Yes, Sir. Friday. That is right. **Board member** -OK, great.

Superintendent - At the bottom of the email that I sent you is the announcement, or the acceptance letter and it gives you the exact time and location. Presenting with me, will be Dr. Holiday and Mr. Zimmerman. There are at least three board members. Two have registered. We will drive down for the day. We will not be staying. **Dr. Richardson** – Congratulations, that you're going to be presenting there about our programs. The second thing is I won't be able to attend, but do you think it will be recorded or something you could share with the board afterwards? Superintendent - We can request from the school board association that it can be recorded. **Elaine Richardson** -Thank you. **Mr. Zimmerman** – Good morning, everyone. This morning, I will be providing you with an update from the Office of Curriculum and instruction. We are going to continue our focus on the learning environment. We will be emphasizing high expectations, teaching strategies, student engagement and having a welcoming environment when the students come to class. But also, we want to make sure that our classroom setting maintains a respect for culture because there are students in the class from different geographical areas locations. We want to make sure that our teachers provide instruction and a classroom environment that recognize cultural differences. Again, we are continuing to provide the best possible instructions to our students and to make sure that everything we do is in line with our district's goals and our district's mission.

So, with that said, one of the things we are doing now is continuing to complete our teacher evaluation process and teacher evaluations. The administrative staff and I will be out observing all our teachers and will be collecting observation data so that we can identify areas of strengths and areas of weaknesses. Because these are individual evaluations, as we collect observation data, and review the data, we will then meet with each teacher or instructor individually to provide valuable feedback based on the observation. Additionally, if during our observation data analysis, we discover there is a district wide area of concern, then a district staff professional development session will be conducted to address the identified need and strategies and support will be provided. Again, our goal is to make sure our staff obtains all necessary training and support to take their instruction to another level. This concludes by update from the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. Are there any questions? Thank you.

Special Education Update: **Mr. Jones** and I were working on a report for the State Department of Education's Office of Special Education. Currently, the State Department is reviewing some of our Special Education data. We are going to provide the State Department with additional documents which allow them to see how the district is planning for and working with students who have IEPs. Special Education data requested included students' post-secondary plans, which is what the students are going to do once they receive their GED or high school diploma. We are going to provide the State Department's Office of Special Services updated post-secondary plans documents as requested. Following the State Department's review of our data, they will provide the district feedback. Once that feedback is received, we will review the information and develop a plan of action for areas the State Department's Office of Special Services may have identified as needing to be addressed by PUSD's Special Services area. Are there any questions? Thank you.

Dr. Thompson -

We are observing and talking with our CTE teachers regarding materials to ensure they have the necessary tools to move their program forward. We have found that some instructors do not have the latest textbook editions necessary to provide industry assessments and credentials. Therefore, we are working to provide the latest editions to instructors. This is vital to ensure they have the latest strategies and latest information to provide to the students that they're

instructing. This will provide the students an advantage over everybody else when it comes to technology and job opportunities. So that's the update for textbooks for vocational education.

Robert Jones - Good morning, everyone. Once again, I am happy to be here.

Dr. Holiday reported on the district's High School and High School Equivalency Diplomas, WIN Career/Work Readiness, and Employability Skills attainments. She highlighted attainments on the High School and High School Equivalency Diplomas. As of today, our students have achieved 114 GEDs, and one student at Camille Graham has earned her High School Diploma. She announced that comparing the GED attainment to last year, we succeeded in the number by 22, as last year, this time, we had 88 GEDs. Dr. Holiday also shared that we are slightly behind on the number of students who have achieved a high school diploma this time compared to last year.

She disclosed that two students earned their High School Diplomas this time last year, compared to one student this year. However, she revealed that we have six students who are currently on the High School Diploma track and feel assured they will earn them by the end of the school year or summer school session.

Also, Dr. Holiday shared the good news: if, for some reason, a student who is on the High School Diploma track aged out before completing the required credits as an EFA student, we have approval from the Office of Adult Education to allow the student to continue on the High School Diploma track if they have attained at least 18 credits by age 21. The student could continue working towards achieving a High School Diploma instead of changing over to a GED track. We are excited about this excellent opportunity to permit our students to continue the individual graduation plan (IGP) they initially started on. Also, this is an excellent opportunity to increase the number of high school diplomas awarded within PUSD.

Additionally, Dr. Holiday reported on the WIN Career/Work Readiness and Employability Skills attainments. She communicated that our students have attained 886 WIN certificates as of today. Due to the suspension of WIN last year, we did not have any attainments for WIN the previous year. Also, as of today, we have 127 students who have completed the Employability Skills curriculum and earned a certificate. This number is 14 less than last year. Dr. Holiday shared that last year, this time, 141 students had achieved an Employability Skills certificate.

Finally, Dr. Holiday emphasized that as we approach the second semester, the healthy and friendly competition between the schools will crank up, and the attainment numbers will increase throughout the district. She feels confident that we will meet or succeed the district's goals in all areas.

Dr. Thompson – Thank you. Good morning. For the academic year, we have obtained 776 CTE certificates out of the goal 1527. We're at roughly 51% of the yearly goal. This time last year, we were at 674. We're currently on track to achieve the goal and we are ahead of where we were last year. For OJT's, we are at 1525 of the 3375, so that's about 45% of the goal for the year. We're a little off pace to achieve our goal and last year we were at 1625 OJT certificates. We're just a little off pace. In regard to Department of Labor Apprenticeships, so far for this year we've completed 2 with the goal of 16. That's 12.5% of the goal. However, there are an additional 17 students across the district registered for their Department of Labor Apprenticeship and should be completed by the end of the year. That'll put us at 19, which is above the goal 16. At this time last years, we had zero DOLs. As for testing in vocational areas, we're currently NCCER testing. There are 200 seats as a District, 62 of those 200 seats have been utilized thus far. Of the 62 seats used, 66% of those have earned the credential at this point and testing is ongoing. Additional industry testing includes ASE, so far, we have used 11 of the 30 seats as a district with further testing to come. And of those 11 seats used, 6 of them have completed ASE testing. There are multiple tests for ASE. Six of the 11 have completed all of the modules necessary for their respective areas.

Superintendent-The new principal for the Appalachian region is Dr. Relus Lucear. **Dr. Lucear**- I'm a native of Atlanta, GA. I've been to South Carolina about 8 years now. I also worked as assistant principal and was alternate school principal in Williamsburg County and prior to that I was in Georgia. I have over 10 years' experience in corrections education while working as principal. I'm glad to be back into the field of correction education. I'm glad to be here with you all.

Superintendent - The new student information assistant will join us on January 16, and the new administrative assistant will be joining us on March 16th, the culinary arts teacher at Leath CI begins on February 12. I'm going to ask the principals who are online if you have any additional new staff that you just like to give us the position at this time. Thank you. Resignations include our HR Coordinator and Administrative Assistant and Mr. Bartola. Also, in your packet is the report for our Post-Secondary participants.

I would like to also add because we do not have Benedict and Voorhees. Benedict is serving Broad River and Kershaw. Voorhees is serving MacDougall. Are there any questions?

Elaine Richardson - Yes, I was just curious the last time in December, we got a copy of something that you sent to Miss Williams about codes for those institutions or several others listed that maybe they don't have any students, maybe they haven't started yet like uh Midlands Technical College or the Technical College of the Lowcountry. Are they having problems starting from those institutions?

Superintendent - We are going through a new process with the federal government that involves accreditation. Colleges must now go through a new phase of approval. Corrections must establish a Prison Education Plan (PEP). Those institutions have not yet started providing services.

Superintendent - Thank you, Dr Thompson will now come up on behalf of two Vocational Instructors who assisted us with the items being presented. We would like to acknowledge that this is School Board Recognition month, and we have prepared for you charcutier boards. Dr. Thompson, please share with the Board the gifts prepared by our vocational instructors. Therefore, we needed your sports team logos.

Dr. Thompson - These are cutting boards, and this was a team effort, Mr. Bozard and the students at MacDougall Correctional Institution assisted, along with Mr. Gardenhire and his students at Wateree Correctional Institution. So, it was a collaboration between Wateree and MacDougall, so we have a board with each member's team logo. They are rather heavy.

Superintendent - We appreciate your time and support. We look forward to the continued work and hopefully we can continue to grow and expand our services to our inmates. Again, thank you for your support and the work that we're trying to do here at PUSD. Mr. Chair, this concludes my presentation.

Mr. Quinn - We would like to recognize our Board Chair. Mr. Sumter. The best way to do it is to read this letter from Scott Price the executive director for SC School Boards Association. Mr. Sumter. Was recognized for achieving 10 years of school board service to Palmetto Unified School District and received a 10-year lapel pin.

Chairman Sumter - Thank you very much. I appreciate it. This is an election year for us and before we do the elections, I just want to say thank you guys for allowing me to serve. You don't know what's in years, but it's been 10 great years. I think we made some great improvements along the way. I do want to thank our principals and staff and your staff for all the great work that you did even throughout COVID; we learned some things and because of that we've increased our use of technology and that helps our students. All the goals are higher and are on the rise. We even had a student with the highest GED score. That was another accomplishment. That was a wonderful, wonderful achievement.

I can't say enough about this presentation that's about to happen at the state conference level. I think that's going to do wonders for the state to know what we're doing here. It will put us on the map because a lot of folks don't know that we're here and I think the presentation itself will be eye opening. I hate that I can't be there. I'll be retiring that weekend from the school system that I work. So that's going to be a little bit of a conflict. I wish I could be there, but I'm so proud for this presentation to be happening. Along the way, we've had some Members not be recognized for 10 years, but for 25 or more service with the School Board Association and I'm very proud to have been a part of that. I can't say enough to Dr. Cash-Greene for everything she's done for the school system. We're in a better place, yes and that we keep getting better and better and hopefully as a board we can keep supporting the school system. Alright, we're going to move on as I step down from our chairmanship and receive nominations for our next chair. Dr. Quinn. has expressed interest in being chairman and I have volunteered to help him as vice chair. Are there any other nominations or discussions? If not, I'll entertain a motion to accept the two new positions.

Rev. Reid - Motion was made nominate Mr. Quinn as chair and Mr. Sumter as vice chair

Mr. Coon – seconded the motion

Mr. Sumter – Mr. Quinn and I will switch chairs. All in favor? Aye, aye. **Elaine Richardson**

Mr. Sumter - The motion passes, Thank you. Appreciate it. Is there a request for the executive session? If not, like to move on to our board members. **Dr. Shealy**, do you have any comments or questions for us,

Dr. Sheley - I have no questions. I just want to congratulate the PUSD staff for being selected to present and agree totally that people actually hear from our school district because you're right, people don't even know we exist because when I happen to say I serve on the PUSD School Board, they're like what is that? Are they in South Carolina? So, I think that's a really, positive step in the right direction and I applaud the staff for taking that initiative. I love, love, love the word scholars. When I first came on board, that wasn't a word that we used, and I applaud because that's huge and words matter. I think that's a huge step in the right direction too. And again, I congratulate you on the data. Remember, you're increasing in the right way and so really appreciate your work and your teams work and congratulate.

Dr. Reid. When I first came on board, Mr. Chair. I think in the third year I had a license plate, with South Carolina Palmetto Unified School District. When I rode around South Carolina and when I parked people wanted to know. Where is that place? and when I told them, they were dumbfounded. Today when I go to different places and I talk about the manufacturing, higher education program and electricity and the other vocational programs. I tell people about it throughout the state. I'm so proud, so proud. To be a part of this great organization with the most wonderful educators who are leading our students to become productive citizens of the state of South Carolina, I take my hat off to all of you. Leaving your family and taking care of these students. You're doing God's will. And I pray that God continue to give me the strength. Continue to do what you're doing. Thank you for all you do.

Tyson Grinstead - I don't have anything to add, but just wanted to echo the seven other board members and thank everybody for what they're doing.

Meka Childs - I echo the comments of other board members. I'm especially proud of what we're doing and presenting to the school boards association. I think that's going to be a wonderful step for the realization.

Elaine Richardson - I look forward to the impact it has. I would ask you to mark your calendars for June 14th, and if any of you are interested in attending, we'll make sure you get all the information for registration, there's no cost to anybody, just the Emeritus. College is putting this on, so that's kind of where we are with that. And the other group that I'm working with through the National College is called OER, an online educational resource. This is essentially like a book that would be directed toward providing support for incarcerated students because we know their needs are very different. The situation is very different than anyone enrolled in a college on the outside. What we'd like to do is make it available to anybody so the schools could download and provide it to their students. But we're interested in finding a source for grant funding. We should produce hard copies, and the hard copies should be distributed to the college students and our prison system. That's in the works.

Chairman Sumter – Are there any other comments or questions? Can I get a motion to adjourn our meeting?

Jamie Quinn motion to adjourn.

Rev. Reid second the adjournment

Chairman Sumter - All favor. I thank everybody have a good day. Drive safely. Please don't forget your items.