

Palmetto Unified School District
South Carolina Department of Corrections
Board of Trustees Meeting
July 11, 2024, 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:

Dr. Jamie Quinn, Board Chairman

Dr. M. Elaine Richardson

Mr. Michael Sumter, Vice Chairman

Rev. Dr. Robert Reid

Dr. James A. Sheley

Mr. Wade Keith Coones

PUSD District Office Staff Present:

Dr. Cynthia Cash-Greene, Superintendent

Mr. Russell Salter, IT

Dr. Beverly Holiday, Director of Adult Education

Mr. Josh Brade, IT

Mr. Rodney Zimmerman, Director of Curriculum

Dr. Relus Lucear, Pee Dee Regional Principal

Dr. Charlette Taylor, Federal Programs Coordinator

Ms. Tamika McDuffie, Midlands Regional Principal

Dr. Matt Thompson, Director of CTE

Dr. Emanuel Alston, Lowcountry Regional Principal

Mr. Robert Jones, Coordinator of SPED

Chairman Quinn called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM; he established a public announcement and quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance – led by Chairman Quinn.

Reverend Reid asks that we pray for Rev. Bessant as he goes into surgery.

Invocation – by **Chaplain Pamela Nates, Kirkland Correctional Institute.**

Vice Chairman Sumpter requested to move on with the agenda and enter into old business.

Old Business – Chairman Quinn requested a motion to approve or decline the minutes. Mr. Coon moved to approve, and Rev. Reid motioned to seconded.

New Business – Ms. Glover provided budget updates in place of Georganna Martin. She stated that the budget is not final and will not be final until July 22, 2024. This information will be provided once it is completed.

Vice Chairman Sumter – requested the Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent recognized all staff participating in the virtual meeting. Mr. Zimmerman was asked to share information relevant to Curriculum Instruction.

Mr. Zimmerman, Director of Curriculum – a quick review of our three district goals which is a part of our five-year strategic plan. We are currently in year four, with one final year to reach our goal. Goal one states that by 2026, 90 to 100% of students will show a 5% increase of trust level with PUSD staff. An update of this goal shows that in 2023 –2024 the trust level stood at 91%. This is up from 89% in 2022-2023.

Goal 2 (part 1) states by June 2026, all student inmates entering PSD will be assessed to determine placement and educational pathway. Our data shows that in 2022-2023 82% of our students were assessed to determine their placement. For 2023-2024 this percentage increased to 89%.

Question from Board Member: – Could you elaborate a little on this process? It can be a little difficult. Share how this is done and why we are actually assessing people as they come in.

Mr. Zimmerman Response: We assess the students as they enter SCDC because they come to us at various levels. We want to ensure that we assess them so they can be placed on the right path to succeed. So, if someone comes in and they've already received a high school diploma, you could offer them the opportunity to take vocational classes or even post secondary education if they come in at that level. We want to make sure we place them on that particular pathway for which they can be successful. This starts with each person being access when they are enrolled. So again, we want to assess the students to see where they are and see how we can put a plan together designed to help them be successful.

The second part of Goal 2 states that by 2026, PUSD will ensure that at least 80% of the students who enter without a credential exit with a least one work readiness credential to include a High School Diploma, High School Diploma Equivalency, a WIN Certificate, CTE credential, employability skills or U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship.

So that's our goal. An update of this goal shows that in 2023-2024, 66% of students exited with at least one credential. This is up from 56% in 2022-2023. We are continuing to work in this area. This is why will analyze data. We visit the schools and talk to school leaders. We visit classrooms and talk with teachers and students, all to gain feedback to see where we can help. Again, it is about teaching and learning. This is a very challenging goal for us and the staff. There are factors that impact testing that are beyond our control. Some may exit and you do not know they have gone or you may have someone scheduled to test but they or in lock up. Additionally, the whole institution could be on lock down and no testing takes place. So, we face a lot of issues when it comes to really trying to meet this particular goal. Never the less, we want to commend the staff who really working hard and try to ensure that everyone leaves with at least one credential.

Goal #3 states that by 2026, 90 to 100% of the teaching staff will be appropriately certified to provide secondary level instruction. In 2022-2023 data showed that 87% of staff was appropriately certified to provide secondary level instruction. This percentage increased to 89% for 2023-2024.

Superintendent- So we have certified teachers. However, we need to make sure they're certified at the secondary level. So that's why the goal.

Superintendent- Can I make a comment about this one as well. So in a sense, we're almost kind of stuck here in some sense because we've had folks here who have been working with certifications other than secondary. So unless those individuals leave due to attrition, we will probably be able to replace those persons with individuals who are certified secondary level. So this is also a challenge for us in some cases

Mr. Zimmerman continued by extending an invitation to Board Members to attend graduations of their choice. If you like to attend, we definitely will need to know that you're going to be there ahead of time and such that we can provide your names at the entry gate so that they can allow you to enter.

OK, so that is very, very important if you choose to attend any of the graduations. It's going to be a busy couple of weeks.

Superintendent – Request that Dr. Taylor share a request for a calendar amendment to the 2024-2025 calendar.

Dr. Taylor, Federal Programs Coordinator – We would like to direct your attention to the January 2025 board meeting. Since this meeting is the day after a state holiday, New Year's Day, will you please consider moving it to the following Thursday, which will be January 9th?

Superintendent – This will require a vote.

Chairman Quinn– Board, we need a motion to move our meeting from January 2nd to January 9th, 2025.

So all in favor, alright.

Comment from Board member Dr. Richardson – I just wanted to commend the school district for these wonderful goals and the progress they're making. My question concerns college participants.

Chairman Quinn – Please hold that question and allow us to finish the vote on the calendar. Is everybody OK with moving the board meeting from the 2nd to the 9th the following Thursday? Can we all vote? All opposed say nay.

Alright, alright, let's move to the ninth. Doctor Richardson, do you want to finish that thought now?

Dr. Richardson – Dr. Richardson asked about adding college participants' data to the overall goal attainments and stated that it would be a good goal to add, because that's an accomplishment as well. If you have someone entering who's already had even some college that if they continue to pursue their education, that ought to count as a positive for the school district.

Superintendent – The district's professional development convocation took place June 24th and 25th. There was almost 100% participation. On the second day, the staff met at the South Carolina Education Television (SCETV) building. The follow-up survey indicated that the majority of our staff found this to be very beneficial. The district recognizes board member Reid for his attendance. He brought the opening comments to the staff, which were inspirational and motivational.

Mr. Jones, SPED Coordinator – We are currently serving 20 students with disabilities at our designated schools. We are implementing the new Education Plan for Sped students, which allows us to track students using their records. All required reports from the SDE have been submitted and are current.

Dr. Holiday, Adult Education Director – Good morning, everyone. You should find the goal attainments for the previous three years in your package. However, I'm going to go over the last two years. This year, we are excited to report two students who achieved their High School Diploma (HSD), including our first Adult Education High School Diploma male student recipient at MacDougall Correctional Institution. We also had one EFA young lady from Camille Graham Correctional Institution to achieve her HSD. Congratulations and big applause to these two students who completed this milestone and received support from

staff to accomplish the task. As shown in last year's Summary Report in your folder, seven students completed their HSD. Although we only have two students who actually completed their HSD this school year, we have several other students (approximately seven) in the pipeline who are on the HSD pathway to earn an HSD.

Also, we have 312 students who attained their High School Equivalency Diplomas (HSED). Once again, as the data reflect on last year's Summary Report in your folder, we have two less students to achieve their HSED. I am not going to say that we fell short by two students achieving their HSED, instead, I am going to say that we more than likely had more challenges this school year than last school year with getting our students to school due to various reasons (e.g., lock-downs, correctional/operational staff shortages, teacher shortages, etc.). Nevertheless, we will keep pressing and moving forward as we embrace the new school year.

Dr. Thompson, CTE Director - PUSD CTE for 23-24 earned 2,059 certificates. The goal was 1,527, so we obtained 135% of the goal set. As a point of reference, in 22-23 we earned 1,551 certificates. That's a 33% increase in CTE certificates from 22-23 to 23-24. The goal for OJTs from the 23-24 school year was 3,375. As a district we obtained 3,584 certificates. That number marks 107% of the 22-23 goal. As for Department of Labor Apprenticeships, the goal was 16. The district was able to help award 18 DOL Apprenticeships. As an update on our industry credential testing, we purchased 200 subscriptions for NCCER for the year. Subscriptions are only good for one year from purchase. We've used 124 of the 200 subscriptions that expire in October. Of the 124 subscriptions we've used, 58% have results in a credential thus far. There's still more testing to come to improve that number. We had 30 subscriptions for ASE testing spread across McCormick, MacDougall, and Tyger River. 26 of the 30 students passed at least one module, thereby earning their ASE student certification. 14 students passed every module for their respective disciplines. There are 10 modules in auto mechanics and 4 modules in auto body. For 24-25, we're hoping to bring on board ServSafe testing for culinary arts and EPA testing for HVAC.

Question: Dr. Reid – What are you doing differently to achieve the increases? Was there any one particular area that improved or increased more than the others?

Dr. Thompson – Yes sir. We're just keeping the goals in front of the teachers. We're also adding programs to give them more exposure. There were no areas that have increased any more than others. There are some programs that went far enough above as a single program to meet credential attainment and help other programs meet the overall goal. Some programs are a little easier to attain credentials over other programs. I am not sure if there was one particular area that stands out.

Superintendent – Stated there are no updates for human resource services other than the fact that the freeze is still on, so we are unable to hire at this point. We thanked the staff for ensuring that the district continued successfully.

Post-secondary participants total 224; Claflin University graduated the agencies' first four-year graduate in May 2024.

Denmark Technical College, servicing Allendale, graduated ten (10) students with associate degrees. Mr. Koons was acknowledged for sharing the article covering the Allendale/Denmark Graduation. Northeastern Technical College, servicing Evans will celebrate its graduation in September. We will discuss addressing Dr. Richardson's request for reporting post-secondary information.

Question: Chairman Quinn – Has the Director or the Governor seen this data on post-secondary education?

Superintendent – A report is submitted to the Director monthly, and I imagine it is part of the Director's report to the Governor. This concludes our report.

Dr. Richardson – Is this a good chance for me to discuss our symposium, or do you prefer to wait until later?

Chairman Quinn – Yes, you can discuss it now.

Dr. Richardson – The symposium will be held on August 9th on location at Clemson at Americas College, and we have two ways you can participate: in person or online. You can attend in person, and there's a small fee only because we're providing lunch and refreshments on-site at the college. Like all of us, the Americas College has a very minimal budget. However, the online registration option is free to attend, and the number of registered people is unlimited, so many people can attend online if they are interested. I'm hoping that the board members will be interested and that anyone else in the PUSD system can attend the symposium as well.

If you look at the schedule, you will see that our discussions and topics are the status of higher education in South Carolina prisons and understanding the landscape and needs of prison education. So, it's a pretty well-rounded presentation.

We will hear that the first step is preparing incarcerated individuals for life after prison, and you'll see our topics for that. We have lined up several speakers, including Ms. Rita Crapps

from the Department of Corrections, who will represent this group and others with specific examples. (Detailed comments are attached)

Superintendent – Thank you Dr. Richardson – Schools were recognized for their success and efforts during the 2023-2024 year. Categories for performance were by regions and categories –

Appalachian Region – four schools met the academic and three met vocational goals.

Lowcountry Region – three school schools met both academic and vocational goals.

Pee Dee Region – two schools met their academic goals and four schools met the vocational goals.

Midlands Region – four schools met the academic and three schools met the vocational goals. Three schools met the goals in all areas of academic and vocational credentials.

2024-2025 Support Staff of the Year 2024-2025 – Ms. Dedra Heyward from Broad River and Ms. Shakeya Sanders from Allendale were the nominees for the Support Staff of the Year award. Ms. Sanders was announced as the winner, and she was presented a bowl made by the students at Manning Reentry/Work Release Center.

Regional Teachers of the Year – A teacher from each region was selected and recognized as the Regional Teacher of the Year: **Appalachian** – Mr. David Poindexter (Perry); **Lowcountry** – Ms. Lillie Hutchinson (Allendale); **Pee Dee** – Mr. Robert Coward (Turbeville); and **Midlands** – Mr. Johnathan Phillips (Camille).

2024-2025 District Teacher of the Year – Ms. Lillie Hutchinson from Allendale was announced as PUSD 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Hutchinson made comments and accepted her reward. A bench made by the students at Ridgeland was presented to her.

Comments – Chairman Quinn and Vice Chairman Sumpter and recognized former board member Meka Childs for her years of service on the PUSD Board and stated that she is considered an icon in South Carolina.

He proceeded to thank the teachers and staff for all they do and recognized the carpentry shops at Ridgeland and Manning for their craftsmanship in making the rewards. He further said he would like to congratulate Miss Sanders and Miss Hutchinson. As someone who's

walked in your shoes, I really value your contribution, as well as everybody else in both of these rooms.

The second thing on my list was, you know, you talked about keeping the numbers in front of people. My dad always said data and deadlines drive production.

You're talking numbers with people and giving them a clear picture of what they should do, and I'm grateful for that. I also wanted to mention that as you start to look at all these numbers and positive trajectories, you come back to the first goal that Mr. Zimmerman spoke of: trust.

If you lead people where they can see the light at the end of the tunnel, it's amazing how hard they will work. How committed do they become? There is a correlation between trust and success.

This is hard work, and it's a hard environment to work in. It takes a unique person, and it sounds to me like we've got a crew of unique people who are rising to the challenge. On behalf of Board Chair Jamie Quinn, I just want to tell you thank you.

Thank you very, very much; you're appreciated.

Chairman Quinn – Do we have our executive session today? If not, do any board members need to report or discuss anything? Other board members made comments about the data and teacher commitment.

Meeting was adjourned.