

Palmetto Unified School District  
South Carolina Department of Corrections  
Board of Trustees Meeting

January 9, 2025

**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. Mary Elaine Richardson (Virtual)	Dr. James Ann Sheley
Rev. Ronald Bessant	Mr. Wade Keith Coones
Mr. Tyson Grinstead	Rev. Dr. Robert Reid
Karen Tucker	

**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, Pee Dee Regional Principal	
Dr. Charlette Taylor	
Dr. Matt Thompson, Director of CTE	Dr. Emanuel Alston, Lowcountry Regional Principal

**Board Member Dr. Reid** called the meeting to order at 11:15 AM and requested if the meeting was duly exercised according to the Freedom Information Act. He acknowledged the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair and assumed the role to facilitate the meeting. A quorum was established with the presence of seven Board members.

Rev. Bessant - led the Pledge of Allegiance

**Superintendent** – Yes Sir, the meeting was duly advertised.

**Rev. Reid** – acknowledged all Board members attending virtually – Mr. Grinstead, Dr. Richardson and Mr. Coones followed by a request to pray

**Invocation** - Chaplain Lester Bandy, Wateree, provided the opening prayer.

**Old Business**

**Rev. Reid** – Requested approval for the October 3, 2024, Board Meeting minutes.

**Rev. Bessant** motioned that the minutes be accepted as read.

**James Ann Sheley** – Second the motion to adopt the January 9, 2025, Board meeting minutes

Unanimous vote

### **New Business**

**Rev. Reid** –swears in new Board Member Karen Tucker and stated she will follow his footsteps after 17 years of serving on the Board. The meeting continued and he requested to hear the budget report.

**Bazella Glover** - Ms. Martin is unable to be with us. On this month's report this is a projected budget for the remainder of the year and there are some expected deficits colored in red. The agency will support the district where there may be downfalls; however, the reduction in student enrollment contributes to the reduction in funding.

**Superintendent Report** –Participants at the Board meeting were acknowledged and thanked for being there and the for the support of the joint vocational education program that showcased inmates receiving iCEV credentials. District Office staff and the Wardens of the two institutions were acknowledged for their collaboration and for allowing inmates to be transported to the Wateree location. The approval of equipment that were brought in for hands on experiences was a vital part of the successful hands on experience. Our newest Board member Karen Tucker was welcomed.

Governor McMasters's proclamation was read acknowledging January as School Board Recognition Month. All Board members were presented with a vocational class project (coasters) as appreciation for their service to the district. This instructor for the vocational class is Mr. Peter Peters at Ridgeland Correctional Institution.

Two District Office staff members were also recognized for their years of service to the Agency. Dr. Matthew Thompson for 10 years and Dr. Charlette Taylor for 15 years.

Board Member Coones was also recognized for reaching Level 1 in Boardmanship Training by the South Carolina School Boards Association.

**Beverly Holiday** – provide a report on the credentials to date as well as the number of inmates enrolled in Adult Education. Mr. Smalls , a senior inmate at MacDougall was recognized for his accomplishment. Comments from Mr. Smalls are below.

**Mr. William Smalls** - "Yes, ma'am. I would like to say that I really appreciate everybody. The schools here was not just like they doing a job. They treat me like family. Even when I felt down Mr. Bowman and Ms. Hershack and all the all the people around me kept me going and I really appreciate them 'cause. I couldn't do it alone and I thank you all and thank them for everything they did for me. "

**Rev. Reid** - Thank you so much. We are so proud of you. Thank you so much.

**Dr. Thompson** - Good morning. Alright, I'll give an update on our vocational attainment for the year. So this far for 24-25, we've obtained 891 vocational CTE certificates. Our goal is 1, 527 for the year. Last year we were at 965, so we're slightly behind where we were last year; however, we are still on pace to meet the goal. We're on pace to get there and we will get there. As for Department of Labor Apprenticeships,

our goal for the year is 16. We currently have eight that have already been verified by the U. S. Department of Labor and we have nine more pending. Those should be completed by the end of FY 25. For NCCER testing for 23-24, we had 200 seats or 200 subscriptions for NCCER testing that expired on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Since our last board meeting, those seats expired. We were able to use all 200 seats for NCCER testing. Of those 200 seats, 132 students earned a credential for a total of 240 credentials. We have 200 seats for 24-25. We have teachers already enrolling students for NCCER testing for this current year. As for ASE testing, we have our seats ready. We have 10 for MacDougall, 5 for McCormick, and 30 for Tyger River. ASE testing is set to begin shortly. Serve Safe is a new industry credential testing for us at PUSD. We have 100 seats that are set to expire in September of this year. Of the 100 seats, thus far 22 seats have been used, and 21 of those have resulted in a credential thus far. Also new to us is the online EPA testing. That's from the Environment Protection Agency. It's the QwikTest 608. That test certifies our students after completing the HVAC program so they can go to any HVAC wholesaler across the country and purchase the necessary materials such as freon to charge HVAC systems. We have 10 seats for that program for EPA testing. Thus far five students have been tested. There are four tests for this certification. Three of those five students have already passed all four tests and they have what's called an EPA universal license. With the other two students, they only missed one section. Mr. Hall, the HVAC teacher at Tyger River, is working to get those students tested this week. We should have all five of those students with the universal license, with other students pending. With ICEV, we piloted three sites. Over the coming weeks we're going to expand ICEV to the remainder of the institutions. Some areas or courses that are going to be accessed by our students include barbering and small engines. We plan to expand that to Kershaw as well since we have the small engine students at Kershaw. The vast majority of our CTE programs center around construction, so we're going to offer construction to those sites where the students are already enrolled in plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and masonry. And finally, we have three sites that a farm component. There are many agricultural certifications offered through ICEV. We're going to begin that implementation as well. Any questions?

**Superintendent** - Human resource services – the district has recently been approved to hire two administrative assistants to serve the EFAs coming from DJJ. All else is still on hold.

Post-secondary college participation data was provided via the Board's packet with current student/inmate participation. The onboarding of The Technical College of the Lowcountry, Beaufort is scheduled to begin its partnership with Ridgeland Correctional Institution this January. We are also having conversations with Morris College who is interested in providing post-secondary services. Columbia International University recently held its Fall graduation in December.

**R. Zimmerman** – Good morning. To Board Chair Dr. Quinn, in his absence, Board members, Dr. Cash-Greene, Superintendent; Ladies and Gentlemen. Good morning. Today, I will be giving you an update from Curriculum and Instruction. As always, our focus is on Teaching and Learning and providing the necessary means by which the goals of the school district and the institutions can be reached. To assist us with this endeavor, we must be in the institutions collecting first-hand information as to determine what is needed by each institution in order to be successful. One method used by the district to gather this information is through SAC or Student Advisory Council. This council is made up of students from the education program at the institution. Members of the PUSD District Office Staff visits the institution and meets with the SAC. Through a series of probing questions and discussions, valuable information is gathered concerning the education program. These questions and discussions focus on "How things are going", "What are some concerns?", "How or What can be done to meet identified needs?", etc. (For

example, the need for additional Vocational Programs may be a need or concern brought forth by students.) This feedback is shared with and discussed with the District Staff personnel and principals. Solutions are provided where applicable. The use of SAC meetings gives the students voice and also helps to increase the district's efficiency and effectiveness. In addition to providing students a voice in their education process, from a teacher standpoint, we (PUSD), is committed to continually building the capacity of our staff and offering continued support. We provide this continued growth through Professional Development (PD) activities. This past Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, we held a district-wide professional Development. At this PD we continued our focus on the district's Goals and Mission. An update on our progress was presented. We talked about Effective Classroom Instructional Practices that Lead to Teacher and Student Success. We also had teachers provide their peers with effective practices he or she uses in the classroom utilizing the Study Buddies academic assistance tools. I want to end with a review of our district goals. The goals of Palmetto Unified School District focus on one, the Maintenance and Continued Improvement of Trust Level between students and PUSD Staff; two, the Assessment of all students to determine Education Pathway; three, ensuring all students exit with a credential, and four, maintaining certified teaching staff. This concludes my update. Are there any questions? Thank you.

#### **Board Members Comments**

**Dr. Richardson** – Clemson Emeritus College program is creating a site for easy access. The symposium held August 2024 was well received. We are currently working with Kerry Sanders from Jumpstart and Restoration Village and Jerry Blessingame to provide opportunities for tours. Question – What connections does PUSD have with post incarceration programs?

**Superintendent** – Dr. Richardson most of the programs you mentioned work directly with our reentry programs to secure jobs, and housing.

**Dr. Richardson** – Are there other facilities in the state like these?

**Superintendent** – We can research the names and email the response to you.

**Dr. Richardson** – We just like to be connected in any way to provide any support we can for any of those programs. I think they are critical in helping that transition period.

**Rev. Reid** – Are there any of comments from Board members?

**Tyson Grinstead** – I would like to say that the 10:00 program was very well done. Thank you for all of what the staff is doing. I hated I could not be there in person. Thank you

**Rev. Reid** – Thank the staff for their work to motivate the inmate population and the training that is being provided through the various programs.

**Rev. Bessant** – invited staff to the Conference schedule in Myrtle Beach, SC. Stated it is going to be nice. Thank you PUSD staff for your work. Also mentions that he will be come a pastor on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of a new church. Thank you for your prayers and it is good to be back and to see everyone.

**Rev. Reid** – I am calling for a motion to adjourn

**Rev. Bessant** -So move

**Rev. Reid** - This meeting is now adjourned at 12:59