

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

October 3, 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

Rev. Ronald Bessant

Mr. Tyson Grinstead

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

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; it was confirmed the meeting was publicly announced and quorum present.

Pledge of Allegiance – led by Chairman Quinn.

Invocation was led by Chaplain Samuel Latta – Kirkland CI

Chairman Quinn requested items from old business

Old Business – Chairman Quinn requested a motion to approve or decline the minutes from the July 11, 2024 Board Meeting Rev. Reid moved to approve, and Mr. Coon motioned to seconded. The minutes were approved with unanimous vote.

New Business – Ms. Glover provided budget updates in place of Georganna Martin. She provided the final budget for 2023-2024. There were no alarming areas questioned by the Board.

Chairman Quinn thanked Ms. Glover and asked for the Superintendent's report.

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Cash Greene reported four schools still closed due to Hurricane Helene: Trenton CI; McCormick CI; Livesay CI and Tyger River CI.

Upcoming conferences Board Members conferences– Beyond the Basics scheduled October 10, 2024 with registration ended September 26th. and the Legislative Advocacy & Delegate Assembly Conference schedule December 7-8 in Charleston, SC registration closes November 22nd.

The work and commitment of the staff were acknowledged, and appreciation was extended. The 2023-2024 Goals which are monitored weekly and published in our weekly newsletter indicated that the instructional, vocational and support staff have worked hard to ensure success of the District. Despite the shortage in staff and the implementation of new programs, the District met 6 of the eight goals. The District's 2022-2024, past three-year Comparative Goals were shared to show the progression. It was acknowledged that the two goals not met were our focus which was the High School Diploma and the High School Equivalency Diploma.

Chairman Quinn stated that these are the two areas we must focus on since that is our main service. He stated that he understood the environment and a lot of what we do is dependent on the ability to get the inmates to school amid lockdowns and staff shortage (Correctional Officers).

Curriculum/SPED Updates/Mr. Zimmerman

Good morning. This morning, I will be providing you with a PUSD Curriculum and Instruction update.

Our goal is to continue to support teachers and students and work to fulfill the mission, vision and goals of PUSD. We seek to accomplish this goal through the monitoring of instruction. This is done through site visitations. We inspect what we expect. Visiting our

institutions provides significant insight and firsthand knowledge of what is happening in our schools. Recent visits have provided opportunities to observe teachers, meet with teachers and students. Through these visits, observations and discussions, we are able to determine school needs and provide necessary assistance.

Additionally, to support teachers and students, we provide Supplemental Materials to enhance teaching and learning. We have Study Buddy devices that are used to assist with student learning and service as teaching supplements. To determine the most effective ways to use of these devices we solicited feedback from school leaders and teachers. Example provided as feedback included, use between Pre-assessments and post-assessments, use in classes with limited computers, whereas some students can work on the desktop while other students in class use Study Buddies. Other supplementary materials use to enhance teaching and learning in our school are textbooks. These textbooks are used to support APEX Learning. APEX learning is a digital learning platform that offers online courses and a virtual school for grades 6th – 12th. These textbooks are aligned with the APEX Learning Platform. These materials were picked up by school leaders on last week.

We are continuing to establish Education Pathways for our students. We continue to conduct transcript analysis to ensure our students are placed on an education Pathway that leads to their success. For example, where we find an opportunity for a student or students to possibly receive their High School Diploma, working with the education staff at the institution, we arrange for an in-person or virtual meeting with the student.

We continue provide support for our teaching staff through the State Department of Education's Teacher Evaluation and Support System Expanded ADEPT. The required orientation for this system was held on August 8, 2024. We have trained mentors the work with new teachers or teachers new to the South Carolina Department of Corrections/PUSD School District. Also, as for professional growth, the district continues provide Professional Development for all staff to build capacity and provide continuous staff support. Additionally, we have integrated Leaders Meeting into our Professional Development Series. The theme is Communication, Collaboration and Celebration of C3. Attendees include principals, school leaders, administrative assistants and district personnel. A meeting Leaders Meeting was held this past week, Wednesday, September 25th. Topics included Data entry, Adult Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Targeted Trainings, etc. We believe that Professional Development is essential as we continue to move our district forward. This concludes my update. Are there any questions?

Adult Education / Dr. Holiday: Good morning, everyone; I will give an update on the district's High School and High School Equivalency Diplomas, WIN Career/Work Readiness, and Employability Skills attainments.

Dr. Holiday highlighted the progress in student attainment on the High School and High School Equivalency Diplomas and WIN Career Readiness and Employability Skills. As of today, our students have achieved 22 HSEDs (GEDs). She further stated, "While we have approximately six students on the High School Diploma track, as of today, no student has completed all the high school diploma requirements yet, but we are optimistic about them completing their high school diploma." Comparing the GED attainment to last year, we had five fewer this time, but we are confident that we will meet or exceed our goal of 314 High School Equivalency Diplomas, and at least half of the students will complete their High School Diplomas, exceeding our goal of two high school diplomas.

Additionally, Dr. Holiday reported an increase in students attaining career/work-ready credentials. At least 619 students have achieved one credential (531 WIN and 88 Employability Skills certificates). Compared to last year, we had 394 WIN certificates and 68 Employability Skills certificates, an increase of 137 WIN certificates and 20 Employability Skills certificates.

Finally, Dr. Holiday enthusiastically reported that as we approach the second semester, the healthy and friendly competition between the schools will intensify, and the attainment numbers will increase throughout the district. She reiterated our collective confidence that we will not only meet but exceed the district's goal in all areas. Despite the challenges we face, we are proud of our achievements thus far and remain committed to our future success.

CTE/Vocational Updates / Dr. Thompson: Good morning. I will give an update on certificate attainment. For 24-25, as Dr. Holiday alluded to, we have 401 CTE certificates at this point. The goal is 1527. Last year this time we had 434, so we're pretty close to where we were last year. In regard to OJTS, we have 591 OJTs so far this year. The goal is 3375. Last year this time we had 929 OJTs. We're a little off pace with that, but I have confidence we'll get there. And as far as the Department of Labor Apprenticeships, right now we have zero of 16. And last year's time we had zero as well. However, I did submit six DOLs for completion yesterday. So those completions should come through in the next week or so. Really, we're at six right now. There are 876 CTE seats across PUSD in all of our programs. As of July 1, 64.1% of those were occupied. As of October 1, 73.2% of those seats were occupied. We're moving towards having all of our seats occupied in CTE courses. As for industry credential testing, with NCCER we have 200 subscriptions. That actually began in October of last year. All 200 of those seats have been occupied

by a student. 66% of those seats thus far have resulted in a credential. 132 students have earned a credential for a total of 240 credentials through NCCER. Testing subscriptions do expire the 27th of this month. There's a big push. I'm in communication with the teachers to make sure that each student that is registered and is occupying a seat does get a credential by the 27th of the month. We have submitted for purchasing for ASE seats. MacDougall will be receiving 10 ASE seats, McCormick 5, and Tyger River 30. We have 100 ServSafe subscriptions for the year and testing will begin soon. And that's in our culinary class, primarily at Trenton. And we have 10 EPA testing subscriptions at Tyger River for the HVAC course. And right now, the HVAC instructor, and Mr. Brade are working through the logistics of getting the students on the computer for testing there. In regard to budgeting, the SCDC regular budget funds are available, and requests are incoming from instructors and getting the supplies they need. Our Perkins application is complete and awaiting approval. So that's forthcoming as well. And finally, as Dr. Cash-Greene alluded to earlier, there are some new programs we are implementing. That brings me to iCEV. An iCEV pilot program was launched at Wateree, Manning, and Turbeville. At Manning, we're offering the small engine certification through our certified instructor, Mr. Wright. At Turbeville, they're focusing primarily on the residential building construction certification. And at Wateree, they get a little bit of everything; but the primary focus is on the agriculture certifications since Wateree is our farm for the agency. That's all I have prepared. Are there any questions for me?

Superintendent - Thank you Dr. Thompson.

We have with us the principal from the Pee Dee Region, which includes those locations that we're piloting Turbeville and Wateree.

Mr. Lucear - Good morning. Good morning.

I do have the practice report/account. We have about nine students.

The computers labs in both education buildings will be utilized. Most of the students are enrolled our residential construction modules or in a vocation classes.

During the last 20 minutes of the vocational classes, students go to the computer lab and work on the program or during downtimes - which is between classes.

The students are very excited about it and are moving progressively quickly. We anticipate completion dates in November.

Post-Secondary Updates – Superintendent

There are 211 students currently enrolled.

We do not have the data for students who are engaged in correspondence courses.

These courses are monitored and financially supported by the families and or individuals on the outside.

We approve correspondence courses because they require staff to proctor exams and the approval for materials to enter the institutions. However, that data is not necessarily captured. We will present that to classification to see if they can somehow code those persons so that we can present that data as well with this particular piece of information. That concludes my portion of the report for this meeting. If any questions, we'll try to respond to those at this time.

Vice Chair Sumter - I have a question about staffing. What are you doing to address that?

Superintendent - All the staffing situations have been addressed.

I've met with Mr. Gadsden to share the information that I've shared with you.

However; the agency is not hiring particularly in this area at this time. I can't answer any further than that, other than the fact that we are not hiring in our area at this particular time.

Sumter

And does that keep us compliant with the state law?

Superintendent - It does not keep us compliant with the state. That has also been shared. I provided a copy of the regulations to Mr. Gadson. He does have that in his possession, and it does explain the number of personnel based on areas that we should have when we are out of compliance.

Chairman Quinn

Yeah, that was kind of the same theme. I really want to discuss. You know, my first question was why? Is the agency the decision maker for hiring?

Superintendent - The agency makes the final decision.

Chairman Quinn – please explain the procedure you referenced – schools do not operate with one teacher.

Superintendent – This is correct for academic staff. We cannot operate a school if there is no correctional officer present. Vocational staff generally operate in separate areas

and no correctional officer so basically the operation varies. Safety is highly stressed. The principals have strategized to move staff in areas where needed a few days per week in order that schools are open at least two-three days.

Rev. Reid – Mr. Chairman -why would the agency allow the lack of staff in schools seeing that the schools are performing well. Rev. Reid expressed his disappointments and stated he just finished a segment with Channel Five in Charleston and spoke about the Palmetto Unified School District.

Chairman Quinn – reiterated that the board's response to the concerns is not a reflection of the work of the staff.

Tyson Grinstead – asked the question – What happens when we are out of compliance Who regulates this How do we fix it?

Chairman Quinn – thanked Boardman Grinstead for his question and stated that we have got to figure out some way to get some level of influence. This sets the urgency to use that law to push. I think that we need to make sure that the agency is fully aware.

Robert Reid - Mr. Chair I recommend a call meeting to further discuss this matter. We cannot wait until January 2025. We need to come together face to face.

Tyson Grinstead – I recommend a letter explaining why we are out of compliance so that we have it in writing. Then I recommend we take this offline and determine next steps. Request for regulations/policies.

Chairman Quinn – stated I agree and requested information of clarity from the superintendent such as regulations/policies.

Superintendent – Yes Sir- the regulations will be provided to each Board member. This completes my report.

Mr. Sumter – shared that Dr. Thompson is doing a great job with the certifications.

Chairman Quinn – supported Vice Chairs acknowledgement and offered congratulations but stated "This is the issue that we are talking about, we're really in the business of getting high school diplomas and high school equivalency diplomas. All of those other six things are fantastic, but the other two are the heart of the business as well. It's incumbent upon us to figure out how we get the right tools in the toolbox for you guys to be successful.

A motion was made to move from new business to executive session is needed. There was no motion for an executive session. The Board agreed to call another meeting after collecting information from the superintendent.

Board Members Comments

Tyson Grinstead – We are here to help you the requested information will help us to gain supporters based on our needs.

Dr. Elaine Richardson – provided an overview o the past Corrections conference – 86 registered and 47 participated online. There were 79 attendees from six different states.

Ronald Bessant – returned to the Board meetings after surgery. and stated, “Just wanted to say hello and thank you for your prayers and your thoughts and well wishes.”

Elaine Richardson – when will we have the next meeting? Will this meeting be in person? She also agreed to host the meeting is needed.

Chairman Quinn - Will a member move to adjourn the meeting?

Rev. Reid – I so move the meeting is adjourn

Elaine Richardson – Second the motion to adjourn

Chairman Quinn, Commended the staff for their work and adjourned the meeting at 11:01