



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, July 11, 2025

10:00 AM

South Carolina Department of Correction Pavilion

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/Absent:

Dr. Jamie Quinn, Chairman

Rev. Dr. Robert Reid

Rev. Ronald Bessant

Dr. Mary Elaine Richardson (Virtual)

Mr. Wade Keith Coones (Virtual)

Dr. James Ann Sheley

Mr. Tyson Grinstead (Virtual)

Ms. Karen Tucker (Absent)

PUSD District Office Staff Present/Absent:

Dr. Cynthia Cash-Greene, Superintendent

Ms. Latasha Reaves, Registrar

Dr. Beverly Holiday, Director of Adult Education

Ms. Nancy Jeter, Testing Administrator

Mr. Rodney Zimmerman, Director of Curriculum

Mr. Josh Brade, IT Manager

Dr. Matt Thompson, Director of CTE Programs

Mr. Russell Salter, IT Systems Administrator

Dr. Charlette Taylor, Coordinator of Federal Programs

Dr. Relus Lucear, Pee Dee Reg. Principal

Ms. Bazella Glover, Administrative Coordinator/HR Liaison
(Absent/Vocation)

Dr. Emanuel Alston, Lowcountry Reg. Principal

Chairman Quinn, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and requested if the meeting was duly exercised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. He acknowledged the Board members present virtually and members at the meeting. A quorum was established with the presence of six Board members. Chairman Quinn continued by leading the Board members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chaplain Hendricks, the Regional Chaplain, led the invocation. A special request was made for the family of Mr. Coulter for the death of his father.

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Quinn, requested approval of the Board minutes from April 3, 2025. Rev. Reid led with a motion to approve the minutes with the necessary corrections of the April 3rd Board meeting.

Rev. R. Bessant, seconded the motion approving the April 3, 2025, Board meeting. Motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Quinn, let's move on to our new meeting schedule. This is new for us, as we have the Interim **Director of SCDC, Joel Anderson**, to greet us this morning.

Director Joel Anderson, provided data on the State of SCDC. Expressed his appreciation for the presence of the Chaplain to open the meeting, and expressed a desire to get to know the Board Members and their support for PUSD.

Chairman Quinn, thanked Deputy Anderson for taking the time to meet with PUSD and for sharing the information.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Cash-Greene - Good Morning, Chairman Quinn, and other members of the Board attending virtually. The superintendent asked that the Board join her in confirming the staff work this year despite the struggles of staff reduction. The superintendent stated to the staff that it has been an honor to work side by side with them as the vision and mission statements become a reality, as described earlier by the staff. The superintendent moved forward by asking Georganna Martin to provide the budget report.

Ms. G. Martin - Good morning. She then provided an overview of the current budget. It looks really good for the fiscal year, and we should have a good year ahead of us. The budget allowance from the agency, as well as the Department of Education, is very similar to last year. The District is in a good place financially. Are there any questions?

Superintendent Cash-Greene - thank you, Ms. Martin. We will also have our curriculum update from Mr. Zimmerman.

Mr. R. Zimmerman - Good morning. To Board Chair Dr. Quinn, Board Members, Dr. Cash-Greene, Superintendent, ladies and gentlemen. Again, good morning. This morning, I will be providing the Curriculum update which includes for this morning presentation, a review and update of the District Strategic Plan.

I want to remind everyone that the Strategic Plan is a five-year plan and that this year (2025-2026) is the last year of the Strategic Plan.

Goal #1, focuses on School Climate. The goal states that 90% to 100% of students will show a 5% increase in their trust level with staff once placed at their permanent location. As a District, we are focused on the trust factor, as we believe it impacts students' progress. In 2023-2024, the survey data indicated a rate of 89%. In 2024-2025, this percentage increased to 91%. The data for this past year, 2024-2025, is not available due to a delay in processing. I will definitely get that data to you as soon as it comes in. Our goal for the data remains the same. Again, for the upcoming school year, we plan to make sure our students trust our staff, and as Mr. Dean suggested, we must encourage our students to trust the system and trust our school leadership.

Goal #2, is about student achievement. I broke it down as 2A & 2B.

Goal 2A, says, By June 2026, all student inmates entering PUSD will be assessed to determine placement and educational pathways. So where are we in terms of this goal? Let's look back.

In 2023-2024, the percentage of EFA students assessed upon entering PUSD to determine placement and educational pathway was 89%, up from 82% in 2022-2023. For 2024-2025, this percentage increases to 95%. Our goal is 100%, all students. We can make this happen if we keep the goal's awareness and continue to do what we are doing to get percentage increases each year.

Goal 2B, states that PUSD will ensure that at least 80% of students who enter without a credential exit with at least one work readiness credential, including a High School Diploma, High School Diploma Equivalency, WIN Certificate, CTE credential, employability skills, or a US DOL apprenticeship.

Here is a quick update. In 2023-2024, 66% of students left with a credential. This is up from 56% in 22-23. However, in 2024-2025, this percentage increased to 69.2%. As you can see, we are not where we want to be, but we are moving forward and making progress. I want to say that I (we) recognize that there are barriers, and we appreciate the work that is being done to make things happen each day.

This year, we will work even harder to reach the goal of at least 80% and even higher, if possible. The plan is to put more benchmarks in place. So maybe October or November, and February. This way we are able to identify those students who are near completion of a credential/and identify those who should be working toward a credential. This way, at the end of the year, we can see data increases as we have monitored student progress throughout the year.

Goal #3, states that by 2026, 90–100% of the teaching staff will be appropriately certified to provide secondary-level instruction. So, this is where we are at this time. In 2022-2023, 87% of PUSD teachers were certified at the secondary level. In 2023-2024, 89% of our teachers were secondary certified. For the 2024-2025 period, this percentage decreased slightly to 87%.

This decrease was impacted by the loss of staff due to retirement, resignation, and the agency's hiring freeze. I want to give a shout-out and commend our elementary certified teachers for doing an excellent job. So, those are our goals and updates. Again, the strategic plan is a five-year plan, and the 2025-2026 school year is the last year of this plan. After this year, we will come together and plan for the next five years.

Before closing, I want to give a quick update on our Professional Development activities. Here at PUSD, we focus on building capacity and supporting our staff. On June 26, during our Staff Development end-of-the-year sessions, an orientation was held with staff to provide them with information about the tool used to both evaluate and support them as teachers.

In closing, I want to thank everyone again, as the data reflects growth, but at the same time, it allows us to identify areas where we need to focus for continued growth. Thank you so very much, and that concludes my portion of the presentation. Are there any questions about the data? If not, thank you very much. We now have a high school update; thank you again.

Dr. C. Taylor – presented the data on high school diplomas. The goal was two, but the District earned three. We exceeded the goal by one.

Superintendent Cash-Greene – acknowledged the staff members across the State serving as teacher of records to ensure students finish their high school diplomas. Teachers were asked to stand to be recognized. Confirming the efforts of the staff. Next, we will have Dr. Holiday, Director of Adult Education, to present.

Dr. B. Holiday – Good morning, everyone. Dr. Holiday began by excitedly asking the PUSD staff to give themselves a big applause for a remarkable school year. She stated, "For the first time since the Pandemic, we have not only met but exceeded all our goals." After the round of applause and congratulations from the Board Members, Dr. Holiday reported the following credentials were accomplished for the 2024-2025 school year.

The goal for High School Diplomas was two (2); we accomplished three (3), one (1) more than our established goal. Dr. Holiday shared that out of the three (3) students who achieved their High School Diploma, one (1) was an Adult Education High School Diploma, which means the student was over the age of 21. The student, Mr. Farr, shared his story and journey to achieving his High School Diploma during a TEAMS meeting, as we congratulated him. He stated, "I pressed over the mountain (high and low) and achieved my High School Diploma, something I should have completed five years ago."

Dr. Holiday also shared that there were at least two (2) more students on the High School Diploma track who fell short of completing during the 2024-2025 school year, but were on track to complete during the upcoming school year.

The goal for High School Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs) was 314; we accomplished 335, exceeding the goal by 21. Dr. Quinn asked that I repeat the goal number and achievement number. After hearing the numbers again, Dr. Quinn and other Board Members were pleased with our achievements and commended us on a job well done.

As for the Employability Credentials, Dr. Holiday shared that we decided to combine the WIN, Essential Soft Skills, Digital Literacy, and Northstar, which is another Digital Literacy platform, into one category called Employability Credentials because all these credentials demonstrate skills and knowledge needed for the workforce. The Employability certificates our students achieved can enhance their chances of getting hired more quickly than someone without these credentials. As they prepare their résumés and reentry portfolios, these certificates can serve as a gateway and a foot-in-the-door to companies because they have credentials to validate that they have specific skills and qualifications that employers are seeking for the workforce.

For Employability Credentials, we also exceeded our goal. The goal was 1,662, but our students achieved 2,432 Employability Credentials, 770 more than the goal.

Now, let's give ourselves another round of applause for our collective success (students and staff) in meeting all our goals. After Dr. Holiday's presentation of the Academic goals and achievements, Dr. Thompson came forward and presented the CTE/Vocational/iCEV goals and accomplishments for the school year.

Superintendent Cash-Greene – Thank you, Dr. Holiday. Let's hear from Dr. Thompson.

Dr. M. Thompson – Good morning. Once again, give yourselves a round of applause for everything you do. I appreciate it. Your efforts make my life and my job easier, so thank you.

For the 2024-2025 school year, regarding CTE attainment, our goal was 1,527. You all obtained 2,036 vocation certificates; you surpassed that goal by over 500 credentials. That's 500 more people impacted. Thank you for that as well. I also want to point out that you exceeded the goal by over 500 with fewer staff. I really appreciate you pushing and trying to make a difference in your students' lives.

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For the Department of Labor apprenticeships, our goal was 16, and we obtained 17. We met that goal.

As for our CTE enrollment, we began the year with 64% of the seats in PUSD CTE occupied. We have 760 seats available for enrollment for students in CTE courses across the District. Like I said, one year ago, 64% of those seats were occupied. As of yesterday, we were at 73% of occupancy. That number has increased, and I ask you to continue pushing to maximize enrollment in your courses. Thank you for that.

Next, we are on to industry credentialing. iCEV, within the last six months, we've really taken that on and embraced that across the District. As of yesterday, we had 168 students enrolled in iCEV, so that has drastically improved. Thus far, those 168 students have earned 116 industry credentials across 16 different certification areas. That is a great job there.

With NCCER, we have 200 seats for the District; 140 of those seats have been used so far. With those 140 seats, 84 students have earned 135 credentials. We have until January 5, 2026, to use the remaining seats and continue earning credentials for our students.

Next is ASE testing. MacDougall had 10 seats for the year. They used all 10 seats, and nine of their students earned a credential. 90% of the students who they tested earned a credential. McCormick had five seats. Three students were able to get tested, and two students earned a credential at McCormick. Tyger River had 30 seats available. They used all 30 seats; 23 students earned a credential. ASE testing will resume as soon as we're able to procure more seats. That's in the works.

For ServSafe, we have 100 subscriptions to be used. We have until September to utilize those seats. Fifty-one of those seats have been used so far. Forty-eight students have been credentialed. I spoke with our ServSafe instructor, and there's a plan in place to make sure we utilize all those seats and give as many students as possible the opportunity to be certified.

And with the final industry credential testing, we have EPA testing. I spoke to that instructor yesterday. We have 10 seats. Eight students have been tested so far. We have two seats remaining. Five of those eight students have earned their full universal EPA license. One student has earned a type one, and he's going to come back and finish up the rest of the testing. There's a plan in place to get those last two seats utilized. We have until September to do that.

That concludes my report. Are there any questions for me?

Superintendent Cash-Greene – Thank you, Dr. Thompson, for the update on Career Technical Education. A brief human resources update. We have been approved for two teaching positions. Both at Kirkland to share with Broad River and Goodman. The positions require a secondary certification.

Post-secondary summer update for June and July. Benedict is serving 20 students, Northeastern Technical College is serving 17, Claflin is serving 62, and Technical College of the Low Country is serving 12.

This concludes our report, and we will answer any questions you may have at this time. The next item on the agenda is Staff recognition.

PUSD 2025-2026 – Teacher of the Year (TOY) and Classified Employee of the Year Recognitions:

The Superintendent invites the Board to remain if possible and join us in recognizing the staff. Staff members, please come forward as your names are called. We made some changes in the process by recognizing the work of each region. This selection is based on nominations, votes, and consensus of the staff. The Appalachian Region selected Ms. Jessica Pisa (Livesay CI); the Lowcountry Region selected Mr. Charles Johnson (Ridgeland CI); the Midlands Region selected Ms. Yvette Lakin (Manning Reentry/Work Release Center); and the Pee-Dee Region selected Ms. Shaquetta Ferguson (Turbeville CI).

Next, we will recognize our Classified Employee Staff by Regions: Appalachian Region, Ms. Krista Arostegui (Leath CI); Lowcountry Region, Mr. Donta Brown (MacDougall CI); Midlands Region, Ms. Dedra Heyward (Broad River CI); and Pee Dee Region, Ms. Connie Taylor (Evans CI).

Mr. Donta Brown was selected as our District Classified Employee of the Year.

Dr. M. Thompson – explained that the chess set presented to Mr. Brown was handcrafted by one vocational class instructed by Mr. Peter Peters (Ridgeland CI).

Each nominated Teacher of the Year and Classified Employee of the Year from each region received a beautiful, solid-wood, and well-crafted Cutting Board with the PUSD logo engraved on it. The Cutting Boards were created and designed by Mr. David Bozard and his students at MacDougall CI.

Dr. B. Holiday – well-deserved recognition, Mr. Brown. Thank you for all that you do at both Leiber and McDougall, keeping LACES and all other databases error-free, and just doing what you do so well.

Dr. B. Holiday – at this time, let us recognize our 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year, Ms. Lillie Hutchinson (Allendale CI), and extend our gratitude for your service and for representing the District in this role.

Dr. B. Holiday – finally, the hour we have been waiting for; it is time to announce our 2025-2026 Teacher of the Year. Dr. Holiday announced, "Our 2025-2026 Teacher of the Year is Ms. Yvette Lakin (Manning Reentry/Work Release Center)." All the staff clapped and cheered as Ms. Lakin was announced as TOY. She is presented with a Philadelphia Windsor Highback rocking chair. The instructor and students who designed the rocker are Mr. Robert Reynolds. This is a Philadelphia Windsor Highback, an absolute classic. The teacher and students did an excellent job creating and

crafting this beauty! Ms. Yvette Lakin will represent PUSD at conferences and other TOY events during the 2025-2026 school year. Congratulations again, Ms. Lakin, on a well-earned recognition.

Dr. B. Holiday – for the hard work, dedication, and commitment from each of you in each region, each school is presented with a \$100 check to purchase school supplies, which will support student achievement and success; thereby, helping the District achieve its overall goals. Thank you for all that you do, and congratulations again to each of you for the part you played in helping us achieve all our goals for the 2024-2025 school year. Now give yourself a big applause!

Superintendent Cash-Greene – Mr. Chairman, this concludes our teacher and staff recognition and award portion.

Chairman Quinn – commented on the assessment that increases teacher certification and the high school data points. He stated that this is a unique world. The data provided shows how you save lives. This staff come and do this every day. What was the coolest thing for me out of this whole thing was when Ms. Lakin was announced as Teacher of the Year, every one of you guys turned around and cheered in affirmation. It says that you have a family. It says that you have a team. This is what it takes to move.

Other Board members may comment here. I know one Board member who supported the post-secondary partnership. I can't remember a time when we had 124 inmates enrolled in college.

I know that if Board Member Dr. Richardson were here, she would be cheering for every one of you.

Chairman Quinn – requested an Executive Session. Instructed the audience that we would step out and return. No action was taken at the Executive session, and the information provided was purely informational.

BOARD MEMBERS REPORT/COMMENTS:

Rev. Dr. J. Reid – We attended the SC School Board Association Conference. We are happy to report that the District is well-known and represented. The State Superintendent knows who we are, and our State Superintendent knows this District, and we have her support.

Mr. Tyson Grinstead – I would like to echo many of the comments you made earlier. It is great to see the improvement that we have made over the last year, and it has been a great day to celebrate these folks who are deserving; I just wanted to say thank you.

Dr. E. Richardson – Thank you to everyone for all that you've done. It warms my heart to see us recognize all of you for your excellent work. I am proud to be a part of this group. Thank you very much.

Chairman Quinn – We will move to adjournment.