

MINUTES

State Board of Education Meeting

Date

April 9, 2024

Time

1:00 p.m.

Location

Rutledge Conference Center
1429 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dr. David O'Shields, Chair

Ms. Rita Allison, Chair-Elect

Ellen E. Weaver, State Superintendent of Education,
Secretary and Administrative Officer to the Board

Visitor Information

If you require Section 504 or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations to attend or participate in this public meeting, please contact Tracy Moore.

Due to allergies of staff and visitors, we ask that visitors refrain from wearing scented products when attending the State Board of Education (SBE) meetings in South Carolina Department of Education facilities.

State Board of Education Mission

The State Board of Education's mission is to provide a leadership role in helping South Carolina set policy and direction to transform teaching and learning so that students are prepared with the necessary knowledge and skills, including innovation, to compete globally and live a productive life.

The following State Board of Education (SBE) members physically attended: Chair David O'Shields, Eighth Judicial Circuit; Chair-Elect Rita Allison, Governor's Appointee; Maya Slaughter, First Judicial Circuit; Crystal Stapleton, Ed.D., Second Judicial Circuit; Jacqueline "Jackie" Lynn, Fourth Judicial Circuit; Beverly Frierson, Fifth Judicial Circuit; Joyce Crimminger, Sixth Judicial Circuit; Dr. Joette Johnson, Seventh Judicial Circuit; Dr. Christian T. Hanley, Jr., Ninth Judicial Circuit; Sallie Lee, Tenth Judicial Circuit; Tammie Shore, Eleventh Judicial Circuit; Richard Harrington, Twelfth Judicial Circuit; Cheryl Collier, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit; Mary Cordray, Fourteenth Judicial Circuit; Alan Walters, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit; and Jackie Terribile, Sixteenth Judicial Circuit. Delaney Frierson, Third Judicial Circuit, was absent.

The following South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) staff attended: John Tyler, Deputy Superintendent, Parliamentarian, General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs; Barbara Drayton, Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs; Henry Gunter, Deputy General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs; Tracy Moore, SBE Executive Liaison, Office of General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs; Frances

“Cricket” Katsos, Administrative Coordinator, Office of General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs; Matthew Ferguson, Deputy Superintendent, Division of College and Career Readiness; Rashard Huntley, IT Specialist III, Chief Information Office, Division of Data, Technology and Agency Operations; and Raymond Dues, IT Specialist II, Chief Information Office, Division of Data, Technology and Agency Operations.

I. WELCOME/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SBE meeting convened at 1:04 p.m. Chair O’Shields called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone who attended.

Chair-Elect Allison led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES FOR SPECIAL CALLED MEETING ON FEBRUARY 26, 2024, THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON MARCH 12, 2024, AND THE SPECIAL CALLED MEETING ON MARCH 18, 2024

Chair O’Shields asked if there were any objections to approving the minutes as presented for the SBE meeting on the Special Called Meeting on February 26, 2024, the Regularly Scheduled Meeting on March 12, 2024, and the Special Called Meeting on March 18, 2024. Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

III. APPROVAL OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AGENDA FOR APRIL 9, 2024

Chair O’Shields asked if there were any objections to approving the agenda as presented for the April 9, 2024, SBE meeting. Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved.

IV. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS AND NEWS MEDIA

Chair O’Shields welcomed any media and asked if any visitors had signed in. The visitors on the list are announced in the Superintendent’s report.

V. STATE BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair O’Shields reported, “The State Board report, I used to think preachers were the only people that said this, but I honestly fell for it. The deal was, I wrote what I wanted to say on Sunday, it didn't feel right, so I scrapped it and rewrote everything yesterday. Because it was easy with February and Valentine's and easy with St. Patrick's and March and was harder with April. I had a plan. I ran with it. Didn't like it, scrapped it. This is today's State Board Chair report.

My wife, Terry, has a poster in her office with a quote attributed to Buddha, “The trouble is you think you have time”. This is so obvious and true, yet we often remain oblivious. As educators we often see time divided into years or nine weeks or months, especially near the end of another year. However, every single day matters to our students. We must make the most of every day since we are privileged enough to have these students most often for just a single year. And every single day matters.

As an educator, I have been guilty of thinking of time as trends or chunks. The time between Christmas and Thanksgiving, or the time known as the long haul, that time after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and spring break. The time that we call the sprint to the finish, which most of us are in now, in that time of review, remediation and enrichment before standardized state testing. We must look, though, at time as capital, the most prized commodity of exchange. We must do our best now and every day. We must remember that time cannot be bought or sold or replaced or created.

I am proud our State Superintendent has taken the time to invest in evidence-based strategies like the science of reading, and the time to align standards to help teachers engage and challenge students.

I have with me today, and this has sort of spurred this particular homily, a report that came out in September, A Generation at Risk, A Call to Action. It's an interesting report, comes from the Fordham Foundation, a conservative think tank, and Centrist Democrats. It blends very well with current efforts by our State Department of Education. You see the report states and now I'm quoting, "With the pressures of political polarization, a rapidly aging society, a fluid job market and the emerging capabilities of artificial intelligence, today's children face uncertain futures. As advocates, we must step up now, emphasis now, to find every means necessary to support our students and their choices. We cannot be a great nation if we don't do right by our young people. The need is evident, the time is now."

Why? Because the trouble is, you think you have time. Thank you very much.

VI. STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION REPORT

Chair O'Shields recognized Superintendent Weaver. Superintendent Weaver reported, "What a moving reminder about the most precious commodity that any of us have. That is why it is such a privilege to be here at board meetings like this, when I'm traveling around speaking with different civic organizations around the state, just reminding them that, yes, they pay taxes that supports public education. But the most valuable gift that we can give anyone is the gift of our time. And I think more than anything that is what our schools across the state need are an army of volunteers, willing to serve as tutors, as mentors, even just to sit in the lunchroom like we've talked about before so that a teacher can have their planning period. Time truly is the most valuable gift we can give anybody, so thank you for that Dr. O'Shields.

I was a little worried you were going to pick April Fool's as the holiday to celebrate your homily, but I'm glad that you didn't.

I wanted to say just as a personal point of privilege too, I know that you all in your morning meetings have already recognized our outgoing member of the board Alan Walters, but I just

wanted to take a moment to add my personal thanks, Alan. You're actually the very first member of the State Board who reached out to me who I sat down with in the fall of 2023, I guess that would have been, or 22 I'm sorry. We are so grateful for the years of service that you have given not only to the school system there in Georgetown that you continue to give, but to your years of commutes and very long meetings here at the State Board. We're grateful for your leadership and for your service, so thank you for that.

The second thing that I wanted to celebrate today was what fellow board member Tammy called a crescendo of excellence. She has served as one of the judges on our state teacher of the year review panel. This is her second year doing that. We just had our finalist interview day here in Columbia yesterday. I understand that they were just incredible, outstanding. We actually have a very good representation of different levels and subject matter areas in our teacher of the year finalist this year.

We have Mr. Blake Bishop from Greenwood 51, who is a high school teacher at the historic Ware Shoals High School there, and he really has a strong passion for public safety. When I got to go surprise him, I was greeted by what they call the Squad 51 there, which is the high schoolers that are part of their rapid response. They are doing CPR training, they're doing Stop The Bleed, they're volunteering with their local volunteer fire district, all things first responders. They wear badges and vests within the school to identify themselves and in case of an emergency or a school evacuation or something like that, they are Johnny on the spot. Blake leads them in addition to his other teaching duties. So that was a wonderful visit there.

Will Epps from Blythewood here, Richland 2. He is actually a three-pete. He is the third teacher of the year finalist to hail from Blythewood. Interestingly enough, he is the student of a former teacher of the year finalist. That is kind of a very cool generational connection there. But he is a science teacher there, and it's really encouraging and innovative what he's doing to connect biofuel industry experience that he has with classroom learning and what his students are doing. They call it the Bengal Biofuel Project since they're the Blythewood Bengals. He is doing some really innovative things in his classroom there to connect the classroom learning with the real-world industry experience.

Katie Farr, who is our teacher from Spartanburg 5, she's an elementary school teacher, and she has a special focus on literacy. You were talking about the science of reading. This is something that she has a huge passion for. I have to tell you, I'm a little bit biased in these school visits that the middle schoolers and the high schoolers are absolutely wonderful, but nobody gets excited more than elementary school kids. Going into a gym full of them, and they are just so glad to be there and so excited to celebrate their teacher. It was just a wonderful experience.

Becca Hamrick from up in Cherokee, she is a special education teacher. They are working with young adults from 18 to 21 and it was such a joy to meet some of her students. We actually had to extend our announcement window this year because we couldn't get to Becca because she

and her students were on Vacation. What they do is they have a coffee shop there at their CTE center that these special young adults run and manage. Through the proceeds that they earn from that coffee shop, they get to go on a vacation to Myrtle Beach. What's so incredible about this is that many of them have never been outside of Gaffney. When you are dealing with the special needs of this population, getting outside of their comfort zone, and interacting in a situation that they have not been in. Meeting people that they haven't met before, those are very real-life skills that they have to be able to practice. They had just gotten back from their vacation, it was incredible. One of the young ladies in particular, Erica, was a young lady with Down Syndrome. They found out that the next week was my birthday, and so, of course, she sang happy birthday to me. She led the music; she was blowing kisses to the camera. I mean, she was on. So that was an incredibly fun visit.

Finally, last but not least, Braden Wilson is from Anderson One and she is a middle school history teacher at Palmetto middle. They're in Williamston and just an incredible example of resilience and just the impact that she's having on her students there every day.

Interestingly enough, two of our teachers of the year finalists are pregnant, so I don't know if we're going to have to have a labor and delivery nurse on site for the gala that we're doing at the governor's mansion. But I believe you all should have received your invitations for that. That will be on April the 29th, and we certainly hope that if your schedule permits, you can be there. For what I know will be an incredible celebration of not just these five teachers, but the incredible work that our teachers across this state do every single day, the dedication and time that they devote to our students.

Finally, last but not least, you're stealing a little bit of my thunder, but I'll forgive you for it in the reading of our guests who are here with us today. We are joined by students who represent different career and technical student organizations or CTSOS. The thought process behind this is that they are providing leadership, personal development, and applied learning in real world applications, just like I was talking about with our teacher from Richland Two. We actually have a young man here with us today whose name is Peter Smith, III. I'd like to read you just a brief biography of him and then invite him to the podium for just a few minutes of brief comment to talk about what these organizations have meant to him and his education journey.

Peter Smith, III is a proud and distinguished FCCLA and we heard that that stands for Family Career and Community Leaders of America member with over three years of active involvement in the Woodlands High School chapter with Linda Lewis, his family and consumer sciences teacher and advisor. During this period, he has assumed significant roles including Chapter President as well as South Carolina FCCLA, First Vice President and State President. Peter's exceptional involvement extends to various facets of his school and community. He was voted in by his peers at the national level at the 2023 National Conference in Seattle, Washington, where he assumed the position of SCCLA National Vice President of Competitive Events. South Carolina was very well represented on the national stage. In addition, he serves

as the varsity tennis all state captain, marching band drum major, National Technical Honor Society Secretary, National Honor Society Vice President, Beta Club President, and Student Government Association President. Furthermore, as if that isn't enough... Peter co-founded a nonprofit organization, P-Sacks More Farms dedicated to ensuring his community has access to healthy food items.

His passions include playing the alto saxophone, dancing, fostering new friendships and cherishing moments with loved ones. Peter is a senior and plans to pursue a degree at an accredited university majoring either in political science or engineering. I was a poly-sci major, so I may be a little tilted towards one side or the other. Peter, please come and speak to us. Thank you so much for being here today.”

“Good afternoon, everyone. As stated, my name is Peter Smith, III. I am a senior at Wilson High School in Dorchester County, and I currently serve as Family Career and Community Leaders of America National Vice President. Throughout my time through CTSO's I have learned and gained valuable knowledge that will help prepare me for life but isn't typically given a traditional classroom. I've learned how to network and talk with different groups of people from local community members to US representatives. That is very important and with that effective communication is key to advancing through life.

The most important thing I got out of being in a CTSO is exposure, specifically being a national officer. I have met with the U.S. Department of Education twice, and personally with Dr. Amy Lloyd. I've advocated on Capitol Hill, met with legislators, and even met with some of South Carolina's own, Congressman James Coburn and Senator Tim Scott. Opportunities like this don't come every day, and when they come, I take them and establish a connection there. This is very important for our future leaders coming up in America. Without these opportunities, CTSOs wouldn't be possible. I would have never even thought of trying to pursue that type. For example, if you think of CTSO, think of it as the final icing on the cake or the real-world exposure that I know every South Carolina High School student can benefit from.

No matter what you do after high school; nurse, doctor, electrician, or go to trade school, you must know how to communicate. You must know how to network and apply real world skills to real world applications. And with that, with personal experiences, I know that career technical student organizations, it's the perfect resource for that. Again, my name is Peter Smith, III, thank you guys.”

This concluded the Superintendent's report.

VII. PARLIAMENTARIAN COMMENT

No Parliamentarian comment.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair O'Shields welcomed those signed up for public comment. Linda Fisher, York County GOP, spoke about the curriculum for the 2024/2025 publishers for South Carolina public schools. Tenley Middleton, President-Elect, SC Association of School Librarians, invited the Board Members to the 50th Annual Conference of SCASL from March 19 through 21, 2025.

IX. STATE BOARD ITEMS

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE (PL) — COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair O'Shields reported that the sub-committee met and took action on two items and had no items for information.

FOR APPROVAL

1. Request for Approval of Property Disposal – Hampton County School District
2. Request for Waiver of South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy

FOR INFORMATION

No items.

EDUCATOR PROFESSIONS (EP) — COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair O'Shields recognized Dr. Johnson, Chair, who reported that the sub-committee met and heard two action item(s) and no item(s) for information. The action items were placed on the Consent Agenda.

This concluded Dr. Johnson's report.

FOR APPROVAL

3. New Educator Preparation Program Approval Recommendation: Alternative Pathway for Educator Certification at Coker University (Coker APEC)
4. Alternative Route Program Approval: Additional Certification Fields for South Carolina Charter School District (SCPCSD) Charter Inspire Program

FOR INFORMATION

No items.

STANDARDS, LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY (SLA) — COMMITTEE REPORT

Did not meet.

FOR APPROVAL

No items.

FOR INFORMATION

No items.

EDUCATOR LICENSURE (ELC) — COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair O'Shields recognized Ms. Crimminger who reported the sub-committee met and took action upon the following 19 cases: three public reprimands, fifteen suspensions, one permanent revocation. Ms. Crimminger further reported that these matters were ratified during the Full Board ELC meeting.

Ms. Crimminger also reported, "A big thank you to Alan Walters for the time he spent on this committee and all the help that he has given me. Your passion does not go unnoticed. Thank you."

FULL BOARD EDUCATOR LICENSURE (FB-ELC) — COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair O'Shields reported that the FB ELC met and took action upon the following four cases: two approvals for initial certification, and two suspensions.

Chair O'Shields also reported, "Mr. Walters, I wanted to say thank you, as well, that is a tough committee. Alan has been nothing but professional all of the time that I have known him. I too have leaned on him. We will miss and appreciate him, I am sure. Looking into the audience, Mr. Richardson, I think you'll be coming in in another month. Is that correct? Those are big shoes to fill but we are appreciative and look forward to Mr. Richardson coming onboard." Dr. O'Shields confirmed that the ratification agenda from ELC was also approved at the Full Board ELC meeting.

X. CONSENT AGENDA

All Committee Items presented to the State Board for approval make up the Consent Agenda.

Chair O'Shields called for a vote. Mr. Walters made the motion. Ms. Criminger seconded the motion. The motion passed.

X. SOUTH CAROLINA BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT

FOR APPROVAL

01. County School District (District) Waiver Request of S.C. Code Ann. §59-39-160(C)(1)(a)(B) or (c), related to a Student Participating in Interscholastic Activities—

John E. Tyler, General Counsel, Deputy Superintendent, Division of Legal Affairs
Mr. Tyler reported, "Before the board said Is a waiver from, an athletic waiver from Richland District 2. As you all are aware, the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 59,39-160, gives the State Board of Education the authority to waive a student's ineligibility to participate in interscholastic activities under certain circumstances. Specifically, the code states that a waiver may be granted when a written statement from a school district superintendent athletic director has been received. Stating a student's ineligibility to participate in interscholastic activities is due to misinformation concerning eligibility requirements being provided by district personnel. Or any reasonable circumstance as determined by the State Board of Education.

It's my understanding that Mr. Sherman, the principal, will provide the State Board with details of this request, and that the student herself is present as well to answer any questions that you all may have. Mr. Sherman."

Mr. Matt Sherman, Principal, Blythewood High, reported, "Good afternoon, board. Proud principal of Blythewood High School on behalf of Bangle Nation, Richmond School, District 2, and Mikayla Young, our student athlete.

I am here to advocate on her behalf for her eligibility. A little bit about Mikayla, she is currently a senior well on track to not only graduate from high school, but seamlessly transition to Coastal Carolina, which is her target right now. As you can tell, come on up, Mikayla. Not only is she a student athlete, but she's clearly immersed in our career and tech program with our HOSA (Health Science), and she's starting her clinicals today, so pardon the attire, but I think it's appropriate. Mikayla was well on her way to graduating last year as a student. She started middle school with honors level courses, challenged herself out her high school experience with honor level courses, not only to balance out the academic but also the co-curricular national curricular. She's clearly immersed in high school experience.

In lieu of graduating early last year which was an option for her in starting college earlier with credits under her belt, she chose to return to the senior to have a full senior experience, dive into some dual enrollment classes. But also finish her high school experience as a student-athlete, which she spent so many years for.

Starting off the school year, her schedule was squared away with not only her host of classes you see here, but she took on two dual enrollment classes through a local university and that was to prepare her for that transition to college. As you know, dual enrollment is a great opportunity, but we do relinquish a little bit of oversight as communication from the school, the home, and also the university in steps were missed.

She was plugged into the virtual classes; it was asynchronous, which means she plugs in and she gets to go. We fell behind because of connectivity. When she reached out to that professor, communication was not clear, expectations were not set and as you can tell, time went by.

Finally, she advocated for herself, went to her school administrators, say, I need help, something's not working. We noticed the timeline, we realize it's not a realistic expectation. She won't finish the course completely, so we withdrew her without penalty, and that's the step we chose to advocate for her. Her school counselor stepped in knowing that now she just needs that full credit HOSA, but she didn't know the credit to be on track senior student. We plugged her into another virtual class to our own platform that we could watch, we could control, and that was the right course of action, where the air was. That was a yearlong virtual course, not a semester long. She is well on her way, she obtained the credits for HOSA. But as

the semester ended and we rolled into semester two and she's preparing herself to not only graduate, but to step onto the track and perform as an athlete, we realized she was not eligible. So, we at Blythewood High School took part in that responsibility because she didn't advocate, she spoke for herself. Steps were taken to put her into full course credit. But as you know with regulation 43-24.1, she must have not only been enrolled in two full credit courses at first semester but have completed them. She completed one, but she did not complete the second.

I feel that we have a responsibility for that. Knowing that and we did not realize that, or she did not realize that until we start eligibility for track, that is a timely process. She knew that this may be an option to sit before you today and appeal on her behalf. But even knowing that that is not a guarantee, she is fully committed to the team. She showed up every single day, she is competed, that's not competed. She has completed practice every day, not only pushing herself, but her fellow athletes. So, regardless of the steps, she's been part of this team, she continues to push herself and push others.

But I'm advocating on her behalf to let her finish this year as a student-athlete, which is the reason she returned to us. I will let Mikayla step up and share a little bit."

Dr. O'Shields commented, "Thank you. Principal Sherman really said it all. I just wanted to say I want to run, that's the main thing."

Mikayla Young, student, reported to the Board, "I've competed for Blythewood's track team ever since I moved to Blythewood. It is an experience that I would never regret. Competing with part of a State Champion team as well, that's something that I look forward to and I train through the summer, I train through the school year. Even after figuring out that I was not eligible to compete, I still continue to train, and I still continue to put effort in the classroom as well to be a good student. But I'm doing this not only so that I can run, but that I can do stuff in my life for which I found meaning in, and that's really it."

Dr. Hanley commented, "Mikayla, you make it difficult because I'm telling you that you're an overachiever. It looks like reading the packet that came to us, I bet everybody around you is intimidated. That is pretty awesome, and you made it very easy for your principal today. This is probably the easiest presentation I've ever seen on one of these waiver requests, so he should be thanking you right now."

Mr. Sherman responded, "I am."

Mr. Harrington asked, "I am curious, what events do you compete in?"

Miss Young responded, "The 400 and the 200."

Dr. O'Shields asked for a motion. Ms. Allison made the motion. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. O'Shields commented, "We do wish you the very best. Thank you again for coming. You made time, Blythewood is a large school, thank you, Mikayla. Best wishes, looking forward to great things from you. Dr. Hanley is right, there's always an inspiration behind it. Tell your mother thank you, Mother's Day is coming. Thank you and run!"

FOR INFORMATION

02. Fiscal Year 2023 – 2024, Quarter 3 State Board of Education (SBE) Financial

Statements— Kendra Hunt, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Hunt reported to the Board on the current status of the budget of the State Board of Education. She reported, "We are working, regularly coordinating, with Mrs. Moore, your Executive Liaison, to ensure that all of your expenditures are appropriately posted, and budget is being utilized as it should."

This concluded Ms. Hunt's report.

03. Literacy Update—Matthew Ferguson, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, Division of College and Career Readiness

Dr. Ferguson reported, "Thank you, Mr. Chair, ladies, and gentlemen of the board. I will also be brief today but wanted to give you a quick update on literacy and the Hope Network schools. We are currently in the middle of things. We are working right now to begin translating Read to Succeed 2.0 and to guidelines and support for districts. It is hard for me on this side of it to say this, but the easy part is getting the law passed in Columbia, the hard part is translating that policy into practice. We are working to get guidance to support districts and schools in the implementation of that very important piece of legislation. We are also wrapping up the district selection of ELA materials. The last few of those are starting to trickle in, and books will begin to ship in the coming weeks to be in classrooms at the beginning of next year for our high-quality instructional material adoption for ELA.

Our math adoption is now on the streets, so we have solicited and put out an RFP or request for bid or proposals from publishers for a math adoption. Review of those materials will begin this summer. The state level review of those materials will happen in the fall, and then next spring will be the district selection of the math high quality instructional materials.

We are also working currently to schedule the last remaining 10,000 teachers, across the state for their LETRS training. There are about 10,000 teachers who are getting ready to complete their first year of training across the state as well. Working with all districts and schools to get those remaining 10,000 teachers started in August. For those 10,000 has started this year to complete next year. So that is where we are on the literacy front. Are there any questions about literacy?"

This concluded Dr. Ferguson's report.

04. The HOPE Network Updates—Matthew Ferguson, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, Division of College and Career Readiness

Dr. Ferguson reported, “Quick update, we are in the middle of budget preparation in both districts. Dr. Rainey Knight is working with us, as many of you all may know her, to help develop those budgets and do some technical assistance in those budget writings, particularly in Williamsburg. Dr. Michael Johnson is working with us in both districts to support the school board development in both Allendale and Williamsburg, and providing training, and being a support to both superintendents. We also have district transformation coaches who are working with the districts going through instructional rounds and supporting districts in finishing out the race to the end. I think Dr. O’Shields said that, may be I’m getting this phrase wrong. But we are in the last phases before beginning state testing. We are also currently working with our Hope Network districts on the recruitment and retention of teachers next year, and trying to connect the dots for them to make sure that all vacancies are filled at the beginning of next school year. And that concludes my Hope Network update.”

This concluded Dr. Ferguson’s report.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair O’Shields reminded all members to turn in their travel forms prior to their departure. He also stated that Superintendent Weaver had told us about the gala in the garden, please be reminded of that. Dr. O’Shields then recognized Mr. Walters.

“Mr. Walters responded, “Yes, sir. Mr. Chair, I'd like to request a moment of personal privilege, if I may”.

Dr. O’Shields responded, “Absolutely, you may.”

Mr. Walters commented, “I Just wanted to say what an honor it's been for me to serve with each of you and some of the members who preceded you on the board. I came on in November of 2019, and not knowing that within a few short months we'd be in the midst of a pandemic, which changed the way we thought about everything. But I was a late comer to public education. I came on because of Sandy Hook. My law enforcement background is what led to that. If you told me ten years ago that I would be sitting up here or in your chair in 2022, I'd have said, you must be crazy! But it's been an eye-opening experience, and not only from working with all of you, but from the friends that have been made. Seeing so many people who are passionate about public education in South Carolina, I just feel like I'm a much better person for having served with you. And so, hopefully we've moved the needle, some on public education, and certainly I've tried to bang the drum for school safety these past few years. I look forward to seeing all the good things that are going to continue under your leadership. And I'll certainly only be a phone call away if you have a question or something. Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.”

Dr. O'Shields responded, "Thank you for your service, Mr. Walters."

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the SBE adjourned at 2:01 p.m.