

MINUTES

State Board of Education Meeting

Date

June 11, 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; David Mathis, Second 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; Richard Harrington, Twelfth Judicial Circuit; Cheryl Collier, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit; and Ken Richardson, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. Jacqueline "Jackie" Lynn, Fourth Judicial Circuit; Beverly Frierson, Fifth Judicial Circuit; Tammie Shore, Eleventh Judicial Circuit; and Jackie Terrible, Sixteenth Judicial Circuit were absent.

The following South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) staff attended: John Tyler, Deputy Superintendent, Parliamentarian, General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs; Dr. Matthew Ferguson, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, College, Career and Military Readiness Division; 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; Cricket Katsos, Administrative Coordinator, Office of General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs; Travis Huggins, Information Technology Manager I, Chief Information Office, Division of Data, Technology and Agency Operations; Raymond Dues, IT Specialist II, Chief Information Office, Division of Data, Technology and Agency Operations; Brando Butler, IT Specialist III, Chief Information Office, Division of Data, Technology and Agency Operations; and Jonathan Glover, IT Specialist III, Chief Information Office, Division of Data, Technology and Agency Operations.

I. WELCOME/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SBE meeting convened at 1:02 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 THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING ON MAY 14, 2024

Chair O'Shields asked if there were any objections to approving the minutes as presented for the SBE meeting on May 14, 2024. Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

III. APPROVAL OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AMENDED AGENDA FOR JUNE 11, 2024

Chair O'Shields asked if there were any objections to approving the amended agenda as presented for the June 11, 2024, SBE meeting. The amendments were moving Action Item 1 from Policy and Legislation Committee, Requirements to Employ Retired Individuals for School Year 2023-24 (each noted below). Dr. O'Shields called for a motion. Dr. Johnson made the motion. Dr. Hanley seconded the motion. The motion passed. The amended agenda was 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 were announced in the Superintendent's report. The following visitors were recognized: Alonda Black, Kyra Smith, Alexis Singleton, Bethany Scriven, Chloe Clark, Melody Woodruff, Genesis Miller, Tiara Dungy (students), Dr. Alison Gise Johnson and Dr. India Bailey (Claflin University), Martin Brown (parent, educator, SCASL member), and Jamie Gregory (SC Association of School Libraries), James Jones (Spartanburg School District 7 School Board Member).

V. STATE BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Chair O'Shields reported, "First, school is out, but it really is not. We know better, it really is not out. We have been out a week, and this week, starting on Monday, we started our reading program as it related to elementary school. We have started credit recovery at the high school,

things are happening. You know that is happening, even within our board things are happening. You will see where we have Mary McDonnell Cordray's seat, which is the judicial circuit representative for Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper. On behalf of the board, I have accepted her resignation on the basis of her move outside of the jurisdictional circuit. We will work on filling the vacancy, but Ms. Cordray will be missed.

This is the last day of the state board meeting to be held here in the Rutledge Conference Center, and it is looking increasingly like a ghost town. When I came in, I honestly wondered if they were rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. It was just everything was everywhere, and copiers and all things.

But as I told you, I was a religious studies and history major. For the June homily, as a former religious studies and history double major at the University of South Carolina, I try to examine each month distinguishing characteristics. The month of June comes from one of two possible explanations. Juno was the wife of the roman god Jupiter, mythology's equivalent in Greek to Hera and Zeus. But to me, a better explanation is from the Latin word Juventus, from which we get juvenile, from which we get a celebration of our youth. June is known for several things.

This Friday, Flag Day, Sunday, Father's Day, Juneteenth, June 19th, is also known as Freedom Day, Emancipation Day. But you see, it is on that day in June, although Robert E Lee signed the surrender order in April. It took until June the 19th for it to be known clearly that General Gordon Granger read the Emancipation Proclamation aloud in Galveston, Texas. Therefore, effectively liberating all enslaved people in that state, which had up until that time been beyond the control of the Union Army.

June 20th is the Summer Solstice, heralding summer starting in the northern hemisphere. That is the day for us science nerds, where there is the most hour of daylight. And in the southern hemisphere, winter begins.

June 21st, is this month's Full Moon, also called Strawberry Moon. This year, this June Full Moon will be extraordinary for the first time since 1985, the Full Moon happens precisely on the Summer Solstice. We will not have to wait for that June 21st start of summer date to witness the consequences for you see, it has begun as early as June 6th. Now you think, where does this term Strawberry Moon come from? This, I think, is very important because it comes from the native American Algonquin tribes that lived in the Northeastern United States, as well as the Ojibwe in the Dakota and the Lakota peoples. It was the sign for the June bearing harvest of such items as strawberries. The Haida berries ripen the moon, and this reflects, as the flowers bloom, the early fruit ripens, and therefore June is considered a time of great harvest for many.

In Canada, June 21st is National Indigenous Peoples Day, recognizing the contributions of the many first nations, the Metis, and the Inuit people.

I want to say thank you to each of you, all of you, both sides up here, for taking the time to come today. Thank you for coming today in the interest of your children, our schools, our students, and most importantly, our future, our juveniles, our youth. June is the celebration of our children, and I am most humbled to serve as a chair of this fantastic little board of people and all of the judicial circuits that each of these people represent. The beauty of our republic and the very fabric of our democracy is in the diversity of thought and the ability to speak freely on issues that concern us. That is the beauty of public engagement, and this the most important task of an educated populace, public education, thank you."

That concludes the state board chair report.

VI. STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION REPORT

Chair O'Shields recognized Superintendent Weaver. Superintendent Weaver reported, "We have so many wonderful things happening around the department. I will try to keep my remarks brief, but as you all know, I get carried away sometimes in the spirit here.

We are celebrating National Youth Science Camp this month. We have two designees who will be representing South Carolina at this very distinguished, no cost camp that will be held in the mountains of West Virginia in July. Nominees had to submit a letter of interest, a resume, and a letter of recommendation from a current or former teacher, which was then selected by an expert panel. Our top two delegates are Miss Nadia Ahmed and Mr. Jeffrey Yu. Nadia is actually here today with us and her family. Let me read a little bit.

Nadia is a recent graduate from the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Math, where she studied AP chemistry, physics, computer science, advanced computer science and astronomy. So clearly, she had nothing going on. While excelling in the sciences, Nadia was also the captain of her track and field team, can play the guitar, violin, and ukulele. Her extracurricular activities include beta club, astronomy club, equestrian club, environmental club, National Honor Society, and she has completed over one hundred hours of community service.

She plans to pursue a PhD in chemistry with a minor in astrophysics. I would just ask her and her family to once more stand so we can recognize them. She has a proud momma and daddy and brother here today. Thank you all so much for being with us.

Our second scholar was not able to join us today, but Mr. Jeffrey Yu is a rising senior at Riverside High School in Greer. While at Riverside, Jeffrey studied biology, Foundations of Computing, AP Computer Science, AP Chemistry, AP Physics 1, and AP Physics. In addition to excelling in the sciences, Jeffrey was invited to perform with the Carolina Youth Symphony. Jeffrey was also the team leader for high school science poll, was a member of state championships, speech, and debate teams, volunteered at Roper Mountain Science Center and has started his own small business cultivating and selling aquatic plants for aquariums. He

believes that through the sciences we can make innovations and advancements in our everyday lives.

I would like to note there, as someone who is very much a supporter of the arts in our schools, that both of these students have a fine arts background. That is so important as we think about STEM and the hard sciences to remember that our arts and music especially is a particularly important part of that. What a stellar representation of our Palmetto State at the National Youth Science Camp this summer. So amazing.

Mr. Chair, you have already alluded to this, but we are in the final throws of a birth that started about four years ago, when the General Assembly started discussing moving the agency from the Rutledge building, where we sit now, to a new location. We are at the culmination of this, we will be working remotely Thursday and Friday this week here at the department. We will be officially moving into the new building next Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. It is an absolutely beautiful facility, and we are so excited for what I think it is going to mean for just a reset, a reframing of the entire culture of the Department of Education. The collaborative spaces in the new building, where we are going to be able to have everybody located in one place at one time. Right now, we have several satellite offices around the Columbia area. We will be able to have everybody in one home, and there is a lot of beautiful space for us just to bump into each other, to have collaborative and innovative conversations. We are excited about that.

At the same time, I also want to take a moment just to honor the 60 years of work that has happened within the four walls of the Rutledge building where we now sit. There is a lot of state history, specifically education history, which has happened in those intervening decades. We are so thankful for the people who have passed through the halls of these buildings, who have worked and given their all in these offices. I think we should go ahead and give them a round of applause for everything they have done for the last 60 years.

As a final pin on that conversation, please tentatively hold the afternoon of August the 12th as a potential ribbon cutting for the new building. We would like to do it in conjunction with your next meeting, which will be on August the 13th. I know that you will have a full agenda that Tuesday morning and afternoon, but we thought we might be able to get you all to come in an afternoon early to celebrate that. We really want to make that a big deal, so we will stay in touch on that. That assumes that our punch list gets done in the building, and it is presentable for the public at that time. But we will certainly stay in touch about that.

I wanted to transition really quickly to something that I touched on in one of my last reports and the op-ed that I was pleased to have appear in the post and Courier about the use of cell phones in our schools. One of the things that we have been very intentional about here under my administration is trying to actively communicate and solicit feedback directly from teachers. Not going through any intermediaries but going directly to teachers. We have started sending

out regular emails to the 50 to 60,000 emails that we have for certified teachers across the state. I will tell you; nothing has generated a response like the one that we sent about cell phone use in schools. What you are looking at on this paper that I have put in front of you today are the responses of nearly 10,000 teachers. Those of you who do marketing and understand response rates, typically a 3% to 5% response rate on a survey is a rather good response, we had a 20% response rate. That this touched a nerve is an understatement. We almost shut down one of our inboxes here at the department because the responses were coming in so rapidly as teachers completed the survey. We asked four questions.

The first question is what phrase best described the effect of cell phone use on your class? Fifty-six percent of teachers who responded say daily disruption in most or all of my classes. The second question we asked was that to be effective, a cell phone policy should, and we allowed them to fill in the blank with a choice, completely prevent cell phone access during the entire school day. A solid majority, 55% of teachers agreed with that statement. Another 37% said limit access in classrooms but allow between classes and during lunch. That is a vast preponderance of all teachers that said that. I will note there was a little bit of subtlety in that answer. A number of teachers said, we need to think about maybe handling different age groups of students differently in terms of whether it is a complete prohibition or whether they're allowed to access it during non-instructional time during the day. The third question we asked was what fit phrase best describes your school or district's handling of cell phones? I will call your attention to 59% of the responders, the folks in the light blue and the yellow said, either their policy and their current policy does not go far enough, or it is not effectively implemented. About 28% said they thought that their school or district had a good policy that was being effectively implemented. One of the things that teachers obviously stressed over and over again was that they do not want to be cell phone police. That implementation is everything that they have to know that their administration, both within the district and at the school level, have their back and are going to enforce consequences.

Obviously, parents are a huge part of this conversation as well. The partnership that we have to have with parents to explain why a policy such as this is important when it comes to not only the academic and instructional needs of their students, but also the mental health needs of their students. This is a significant impact too, on teacher retention. If we want to keep great teachers in the classroom, we have to think about the impact that this has on student behavior. The final question we ask was how much daily instructional time would you estimate is lost due to cell phone user related distractions? Twenty-five percent of teachers responded that over an hour of their daily instructional time is disrupted by cell phone related distractions. We also gave teachers an opportunity to provide just open-ended feedback, we had almost five thousand teachers that did that. We have looked through all of those comments and underneath there you will see the major themes that emerged from those comments as we look ahead to the ongoing budget negotiations in the General assembly.

There are two different cell phone related provisos and so we will see whether the House

language or the Senate language prevails. The Senate language would require this board to develop a model policy that local districts would then be required to adopt. If the Senate version prevails, obviously we will have a ripe source of feedback. These teachers have given us many great, very actionable ideas that could be incorporated into a policy. We will ensure that there are conversations with district leaders such as our chair here, to understand the state of play and account for that in different districts. As I mentioned earlier, we certainly are going to have to collaborate with parents to explain the need for this policy and to seek their support of our educators in the implementation of it. We will certainly stay in touch with you on that.

In closing, the last thing that I wanted to bring before you today kind of flows into that. Because one of the things that we have seen in the research that social scientists have seen anecdotally in the interviews that they have done, is that technology in many ways is robbing students of their ability to effectively engage and interact with other people. One of the things that I am so thankful for in coming into the department as we took the baton from Doctor Mathis and Superintendent Spearman was the work that they have done with the Maxwell Transformation Tables, the iLead curriculum, that I have talked with you all about before. One of the consistent pieces of feedback that we get from educators around that curriculum is that it is teaching students to be intentional and to communicate with each other; to understand perspectives, to talk across Differences and to actually engage in a meaningful way and not just stare at a screen. This year, I am pleased to report that we have crested the 50,000-student mark in terms of students served. Sarah Gams, who is a former teacher of the year, has done an incredible job implementing this program for us, and she shares with me that there is demand for 56,000 students next year. John Maxwell is actually going to be at the School of Administrators conference next week. I anticipate after he speaks, we are going to have a huge spike in interest after that. That is another item that is currently in the Senate version of the budget. We have requested money to support that care, character and resilience education and civics work in the budget. We will see how that shakes out once the conference committee gets us their report.

In closing, I wanted to play a video that was recently recorded in Lancaster County. The school district there has partnered with their local chamber of commerce and actually done several of these Maxwell iLead transformation tables, not just with students and educators, but with members of the business community. We went up and we talked to members of the business community, you will not see them in this video, maybe that will be a future iteration of it. But they shared why it was important to them to be part of this initiative. And they said, it is about soft skills. The students that we employ have to be able to look somebody in the eye to shake somebody's hand. But it is deeper than just the skills, it is about the character qualities that an employee has to have. Showing up on time, having integrity, being honest, treating customers with kindness, there are so many character habits. As one of the ladies told us, she said, "I've learned through this process that soft skills actually translate into life skills," and that is ultimately what we want. It is going beyond soft skills to ensuring that our students have life skills. With that, my report will be concluded, thank you." (A video showcasing Maxwell iLead transformation tables in Lancaster County schools was shown).

This concluded the Superintendent's report.

VII. PARLIAMENTARIAN COMMENT

Mr. Tyler reported, "Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the State Board of Education. Today we are going to stray from Robert's Rules of Order, I know you are disappointed to hear that. Robert's rules govern the how we meet portion of our meetings. We are going to talk about governance. Our governances as passed by the State Board of Education, particularly the one governs when we meet, and that is governance Code BC, which was issued in 1978 and has been revised four times since then, as recently as 2016. It governs our meeting schedule and sets forth that the State Board of Education shall meet on the second Tuesday of each month. Unfortunately, as Dr. Shields and Superintendent Weaver have recently discussed, this meeting schedule does not align well with the process of promulgating regulations, which is a significant component which this board addresses. The Legislative Council publishes the state register and requires filings to be submitted by the second Friday of each month. I am no mathematician, but I understand that about half of the months, the second Friday falls before the second Tuesday. In other words, we are often lagging in the State Board of Education's ability to submit timely filings, to legislative council. Therefore, the South Carolina Department of Education is going to work with Dr. Shields to determine if there is a day that better aligns with the regulatory schedule within the first week of the month. So that is just a heads up that you may be receiving communication about that. There might be an item on the agenda in the August board meeting that addresses that."

This concluded the Parliamentarian's report.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair O'Shields welcomed those signed up for public comment. "At this point, we move to the point of public comment, which I think gets back to the point of iLead. In looking at our list, we have fourteen people that have requested to speak. If we hold to what we have, and that is five minutes, then only six people get to speak. What I am recommending you all got to approve it is if they came and they want to speak. My request is that we give them that chance and we can limit then the amount of time, not five, but you could get all of these in with two minutes and ten seconds, something like that." Dr. O'Shields called for a motion to waive the public comment period and allow each member to speak just a bit over two minutes each. Ms. Slaughter made the motion. Mr. Richardson seconded the motion. The motion passed. The following individuals spoke: Tarin Lewis, Justin Freeman, Mason Summers, Elliott Naddell, Clementine Jordan, Nacala McDaniels, Jennifer Bartell Boykin, Marcus McDonald, Beanca Woodard, James Jones, Susi Longm Baba Seitu Amwnwahsu, and Jason Ruscher. Dr. O'Shields thanked everyone who submitted comments and reminded everyone that as public comments, the Board is hearing comments for the first time, and no action can be taken at this point.

IX. STATE BOARD ITEMS

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE (PL) — COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. O'Shields reported that the subcommittee met and heard one action item and no items for information. The action item was placed on the Consent Agenda.

This concluded Dr. O'Shields report on the committee.

FOR APPROVAL

1. Item removed from agenda (Requirements to Employ Retired Individuals for School Year 2023-24)

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 five 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

1. 2024-25 Updates to the South Carolina Certification Assessment Program
2. Approval Request: New Career and Technical Education (CTE) Work-Based Certification Fields
3. Approval Request: Reactivation of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Work-Based Certification Field of Hospitality and Tourism
4. Professional Review Committee Membership Approval
5. National Accreditation Decision: Limestone University

FOR INFORMATION

No items.

STANDARDS, LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY (SLA) — COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair O'Shields noted Chair Lynn was absent and recognized Ms. Allison, Chair-Elect, who reported that the sub-committee met and heard five action item(s) and no item(s) for information. The action items were placed on the Consent Agenda.

This concluded Ms. Allison's report.

FOR APPROVAL

6. Selection of State Textbook Depository

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 eighteen cases: one denial for initial certification, three public reprimands, and fourteen suspensions. Ms. Crimminger further reported that these matters were ratified during the Full Board ELC meeting.

Ms. Crimminger also reported,

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: one denial for initial certification, two permanent revocations and one dismissal. Dr. O'Shields further confirmed the ratification of the work of the Educator Licensure Committee.

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. Ms. Crimminger made the motion. Dr. Mathis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

X. SOUTH CAROLINA BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT

FOR APPROVAL

No items.

FOR INFORMATION

1. **Requirements to Employ Retired Individuals – School Year 2023 - 2024**— Kendra Hunt, Deputy Superintendent, Chief Financial Office

Ms. Hunt reported, "Mr. Chair and members of the board. I will be very quick today. Just a brief update for retiree assurance waivers. The State Board of Education designates areas of critical academic and critical geographic need on an annual basis. In pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 9-1-1795, certified teachers that retired after January 1st, 2013, or prior to age 62 meeting the critical needs requirements may request a waiver to be exempt from the \$10,000 earnings

limitation cap. These waiver requests are completed and certified by the districts, ensuring that no qualified non-retired candidates were available for the position. As required by the law, our department verifies and reviews the information before sending the approved forms to PEBA to prevent any loss of benefits for the approved individual. I am here today to provide you with the required notification regarding the engagement of retired members as teachers for the school year 2024. You all should have a handout in front of you that has a listing of the total retired teachers by district that were approved for retirement. The retirement limitation waiver for school year 2024. That concludes the information that I have for you. Are there any questions I can answer today?"

This concluded Ms. Hunt's report.

2. Legislative Update—Robert Cathcart, Policy and Legal Advisor, Office of Governmental Affairs, Division of Legal Affairs

Mr. Cathcart reported, "Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the Board. Good to be with you all. Last time, I spoke, I was speaking about regulations, and we will kind of cover that again briefly.

One slight legislative update, the most important piece we are still kind of waiting on is the budget. The House and Senate Conference committee will be meeting tomorrow and Thursday to try to finalize some of those pieces. Budget will go into effect July 1st, so we will definitely know by then what the final pieces have been hashed out.

Then on the regulatory side, just as a brief reminder of the process, if a regulation sits before the General Assembly for 120 days without any negative action, the regulation becomes effective upon publication in the state registered. We have three regulations that have met this deadline so far. The first is 43188 that is displaying the flag. The second reading was on March 10th, 2023. Some of you all probably were not on the state board, but it just complies with the Senate bill that governs the display of the US flag, state flag, and state mottos. Regulation 43-1-80, school bus aids, the second reading was October 10th, 2023. this addresses the use of aids on school buses, particularly for students in wheelchairs and using child safety restraint systems. Finally, regulation 43-243.1, that's criteria for entry into programs of special education for students with disabilities. The second reading from this board was October the 10th, 2023. That regulation governs updates to previous regulation, provides clarity, and supports more uniform implementation of eligibility criteria under the Federal IDEA. Those all became effective on May 24th, in that publication?"

This concluded Mr. Cathcart's report.

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

Dr. Ferguson reported, "Good afternoon. I think I do officially stand between you and

adjournment, but I want to update all of you on the Hope Network, specifically around the excellence and teaching awards. Just a few weeks ago, we were able to go to both Allendale and Williamsburg and award teachers' excellence in teachings awards. These awards come from the work that started in Charleston with the meeting street schools. Superintendent Weaver was able to attend one of those award ceremonies and she came back and was so moved by the story of the teachers who received these awards. She said, I want to figure out how to bring the same energy, the same reward system to our Hope Network district. We set out to do just that in Allendale and Williamsburg this year, we were able to institute the excellence in teaching awards in seven schools.

In Allendale, we did both elementary and middle, and in Williamsburg we started just with the elementary schools. What these awards do are they provide monetary incentives to teachers who are growing their students, both in ELA and math beyond a year. Some of the highest award winners in Allendale and Williamsburg were able to grow their students a full two years in English and a full two years in math. The average awards were \$5,000 for these educators. There were fifty-seven awards presented at the award ceremony. They range from \$200 to \$29,500. We were able to award one educator who had outstanding student academic growth a check for \$29,500. There were several checks of over \$20,000. There were multiple checks of over \$10,000. I just have to say to this Board that the looks on the faces of those educators who were brought into an assembly or called to the district office for a meeting, not knowing what they were there for, to then hear their name called and the story of their classroom as shared by their peers in the building, by their superintendent and principals, and then realize that there's a check for \$29,000, it was life changing.

What is most exciting to me about those awards is that we are rewarding educators for doing what they do best and what they should be focused on, which are student academic outcomes. To be able to shine a light and to recognize, elevate and celebrate those educators who are making a difference in places that are very difficult to make a difference in, but who are, and have been in those classrooms and those schools growing children. It was a great event, and we look forward to being able to grow that even more next year.

That brings me to the second point that I want to update you on, which is the work we have been doing in both Allendale and Williamsburg around the budget process. We have been providing technical assistance to both districts to be able to align resources around a clear mission and vision to improve student outcomes. That includes the department through some funding, we are able to fund the excellence in teaching awards this year for those districts. We are working with those districts to be able to sustain that work by building those awards into their local budget with continued state support but being able to sustain that beyond state control.

We are also looking at providing, providing focus in the budget around capital improvement. We are watching the fund balance but being able to move funding into a capital improvements fund. Superintendent Weaver has also asked us to take a very strong look at doing all of this

work and looking at the finances for impact without increasing taxes in those local communities. How can we make sure that every dollar counts for improving student academic outcomes? We are working through that process. As soon as I leave here today, I will be driving to Williamsburg to work with their board tonight on the budget process and finance systems, and making sure that those are up to date and that resources are aligned for their greatest impact.”

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.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the SBE adjourned at 2:19 p.m.