

The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT

A Florence 1 School of Innovation

This document is formatted to meet the requirements of S.C. Code §59-19-350 for Schools of Innovation and to serve as the application packet for “The Citadel Leadership Academy a Florence 1 School of Innovation” in formal partnership with The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina (“The Citadel”).

1. Executive Summary

Florence 1 Schools proposes The Citadel Leadership Academy, A Florence 1 School of Innovation—a leadership academy grounded in the core values of Character, Academics, Military, and Fitness, integrating rigorous academics, leadership and character development, a STEM- and performing-arts-rich curriculum, and military science across the entire high school experience. The SOI will:

- Operate as a School of Innovation within F1S with approved flexibilities pursuant to §59-19-350;
- Leverage a formal partnership with The Citadel to align instructional design with the college’s Core Values (Honor, Duty, Respect) and four pillars (Character, Academics, Military, Fitness), and to embed the Five C’s of Character Development (Code, Compass, Courage, Conduct, and Consistency) throughout the curriculum;
- Offer a college-preparatory program emphasizing leadership development, with curriculum focus in STEM and Performing Arts, along with dual enrollment, school-wide ROTC each year, competitive athletics, and progressive summer encampments on the F1S campus and at The Citadel;
- Provide a pathway to postsecondary success, including admission consideration and scholarship pathways to The Citadel for students who meet defined criteria.

*Open enrollment subject to program capacity; admissions will comply with S.C. Code §59-19-350, subsection (C), and will not discriminate or preference any individual or group.

2. Mission & Vision

Mission. To educate and develop principled student leaders who demonstrate Honor, Duty, and Respect; excel academically; pursue leadership, military science and physical fitness with purpose; and graduate prepared for college, career, and citizen-leadership—fully aligned to South Carolina’s Profile of the Graduate.

Vision. The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT graduates are principled leaders—humble, authentic, courageous, disciplined, and service-oriented—equipped with the knowledge, character, and fitness to lead in complex, rapidly changing environments.

3. Partner Entities & Roles

Primary Higher-Education Partner – The Citadel

- Align leadership and academic curriculum to Citadel core values, pillars and Five C’s of Character Development
- Co-design leadership courses, capstones, and summer encampments; guest lectures and mentorship.
- Facilitate experiences on The Citadel campus (e.g., leadership reaction courses, labs, observerships, performances, athletic clinics), subject to availability.
- Explore early-college/dual-enrollment and scholarship pathways for qualifying cadets.

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Regional Partners (non-exhaustive; MOUs on file or in development)

- Local businesses and industry in the Pee Dee (leadership practicums, internships, mentorships).
- Citadel alumni in the Pee Dee (networking, leadership seminars, career and college coaching).
- Community partners (veterans' groups, civic organizations) to expand service-learning.

4. Rationale & Expected Impact

- **Workforce & Civic Leadership:** The Pee Dee region benefits from graduates who are academically strong and leadership-ready. The SOI strengthens regional leadership capacity across sectors (military, public safety, engineering, health, business, arts).
- **Student Success:** Daily integration of leadership, fitness, and ROTC supplements rigorous academics to increase student engagement, persistence, and college/career readiness.
- **Equity & Access:** Open to all eligible students (space-limited), with transportation, targeted supports, and no tuition or fees for participation.

Measurable outcomes (also see §10 Accountability Plan): - Increase % of students passing EOCEP; Increase Algebra 1, English 2, Biology 1, US History; - Increase Dual-enrollment credits earned per student; Increase FAFSA completion and college acceptance; - Increase ROTC completion and leadership credentialing; Increase physical fitness benchmarks; Decrease chronic absenteeism.

5. Program Design

5.1 Academic Model

- **Course of Study:** South Carolina graduation plan with enhanced STEM (e.g., Computer Science, Engineering, Data Science), and embedded leadership seminars.
- **Dual Enrollment (DE):** College-credit offerings (priority in core, STEM and leadership-adjacent courses) delivered on F1S campus, The Citadel campus (as feasible), or online through approved partners.
- **Instructional Strategies:** Project-based learning, problem-based leadership scenarios, performance tasks, and leadership practicums with regional partners.

5.2 Leadership, Military, and Fitness Integration

- **JROTC every year (9–12)** as a program requirement (Air Force/Army/Navy/Marine Corps depending on availability).
- **Daily leadership block** incorporating The Citadel's Core Values and Five C's of Character Development.
- **Physical Fitness:** Structured physical fitness aligned to age-appropriate standards and The Citadel's fitness ethos; JROTC/ROTC satisfies PE credit where permitted by policy/regulation.
- **Summer Encampments:** On-campus intensives and The Citadel experiences (leadership reaction course, field exercises, seminars, arts/athletics clinics).

5.3 Athletics & Electives

- Students may participate in competitive athletics and electives, coordinated to ensure compatibility with leadership blocks and ROTC.

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5.4 Schedule & Calendar

- Innovative bell schedule with protected blocks for leadership/military/fitness; flexible calendar to support encampments, practicums, and DE. (Waiver requests in §8.)

5.5 Student Supports & Services

- Academic tutoring, leadership coaching, counseling, MTSS/IEP/504 services; college/career advising; transportation and meals per district policy.

6. Governance & Oversight

- SOI remains under the authority of the Florence 1 Schools Board of Trustees and Superintendent.
- A SOI Steering Council (district leaders, school leaders, Citadel representatives, partners, parents, and students) advises on implementation fidelity, alignment to The Citadel strategic plan, and continuous improvement.
- The school principal/director and any assistant principals serving in positions requiring SC administrator certification will hold the appropriate SC administrative certification. Florence 1 Schools is not requesting flexibility from administrator certification requirements.
- Transparent public reporting per §59-19-350(A)(3) and subsection (4) (see §10).

7. Compliance With §59-19-350 Process

- Identification of requested exemptions and financial model disclosed in public meeting (see §8 and §9).
- Local Board Approval: Two-thirds affirmative vote for each exemption (subsection (A)(1)–(2)).
- State Board Approval: Upon local approval, submission to State Board of Education; two-thirds vote required (subsection (A)(2)(c)).
- Annual Requirements (by July 1): (a) demonstrate financial model compliance; (b) provide full financial statements; (c) report academic achievement using the same assessments/matrices as other public schools by grade level (subsection (A)(3)).
- Three-Year Review: Submission of evaluation documentation for State Board review (subsection (D)).
- Non-Exempt Areas: No exemptions sought from nondiscrimination, health/safety, civil, or disability rights, attendance minimums, state assessments, administrator certification, or core-area certification requirements (subsection (B)). All school administrators required to hold SC administrator certification.

8. Requested Exemptions & How Flexibility Supports Achievement

Note: No request seeks blanket exemption from all statutes/regulations. Each request is narrowly tailored to support academic achievement and the Profile of the Graduate, with safeguards for health, safety, civil rights, attendance, assessment, and teacher certification in core areas.

Non-exempt: Nondiscrimination; health/safety/civil/disability rights; attendance minima; state assessments; and core-area certification minimums per §59-19-350(B).

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Statute/Regulation	Topic	Specific Flexibility & Rationale (Academic Impact)
S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-234 (II)(B); (VI)(C)(1)	Graduation Requirements – Hours/Seat Time	Authorize credit by mastery/competency even when face-to-face minutes fall below 120 hours due to SOI's integrated schedule and intensives. Applies to core academic courses and leadership, military, fitness courses as designated by the district which enables rigorous, experiential learning aligned to Citadel pillars while sustaining expectations for mastery of course and curriculum standards. Safeguards: (a) mastery-based grading aligned to course standards; (b) common unit benchmarks and performance tasks; (c) required participation in all state assessments (EOCEP/SCREADY/EOCs as applicable); (d) maintenance of minimum attendance requirements (no waiver requested under §59-19-350(B)(3)); (e) intervention/acceleration blocks for students not yet proficient; (f) transparent reporting of course outcomes in the annual July 1 report.
S.C. Code Ann. §59-1-425(A)	School Calendar; Instructional Days	Flexible bell schedule/calendar to integrate encampments, ROTC events, partner practicums, and DE sessions while maintaining required annual instructional time and assessment participation.
S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-70	Textbook/Instructional Materials	Use of partner-developed materials (Citadel leadership curricula, ROTC materials) alongside SCDE-approved

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Statute/Regulation	Topic	Specific Flexibility & Rationale (Academic Impact)
		resources to deepen leadership/ethics instruction.
S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-205 (IV)(A)(3)	Specialized Program Personnel, Teachers, School Counselors, and Library Media Specialists	Permit flexibility in staffing specialized non-administrative leadership, military science, fitness, mentoring, and other unique program support positions necessary to implement the SOI model. This flexibility does not apply to the principal/director or assistant principals or core academic teaching positions.
S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-209(A)	Support Personnel	Permit partner-provided specialists (e.g., leadership mentors, fitness/athletic performance coaches) under district oversight to expand student services.
S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-51; 43-52	Teacher Certification/Credentials	For non-core leadership/military science/fitness courses, allow expert practitioners (e.g., Citadel faculty/staff, retired officers) under district supervision; core academic areas maintain certification requirements with up to 25% flexibility as permitted by §59-19-350(B)(5) (baccalaureate/graduate degree in subject taught).
S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-63	CTE Work-Based Learning	Flexibility to recognize leadership practicums and ROTC-aligned experiences as supervised WBL where appropriate, expanding real-world application of leadership and STEM.

Local Policies: Parallel flexibility may be requested for leadership credential recognition, and practicum hour accounting, while preserving overall graduation requirements and student supports.

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9. Financial Model (Disclosure)

Operations. Funded primarily through F1S general fund comparable to other high schools; augmented by in-kind and financial support from partners (e.g., leadership curriculum, mentorship, facilities access, encampments, equipment), competitive grants, and allowable categorical funds aligned to program purposes.

Capital. If additional capital improvements are necessary to support the SOL, including leadership reaction course elements, fitness and athletic performance spaces, or other facility improvements, Florence 1 Schools may utilize district funds, partner contributions, philanthropic support, or other legally permissible funding sources. Any capital improvements or financing associated with the School of Innovation will be undertaken in accordance with applicable state law and existing district debt, procurement, and financial requirements. No exemption from state capital-financing requirements is requested.

Federal Maintenance of Effort. Florence 1 Schools will structure the operating and capital financing of the School of Innovation so that implementation does not jeopardize the District's compliance with applicable federal Maintenance of Effort requirements. District finance and federal programs personnel will evaluate the projected and annual impact of the School of Innovation on state and local fiscal effort and will maintain the level of fiscal effort required for continued eligibility for applicable federal education funds.

Title I Comparability. If the Citadel Leadership Academy receives a separate School Identification Number and is served as a Title I school, Florence 1 Schools will include the school in its annual Title I Comparability review. District finance, human resources, and federal programs personnel will evaluate student enrollment, student-to-teacher ratios, staffing ratios, and the distribution of state and local instructional resources among applicable Title I schools. Resource and staffing allocations will be adjusted as necessary to maintain compliance with federal Comparability requirements.

Annual Transparency. SOL will publish by July 1: (a) attestation to financial model; (b) full financial statements; (c) program metrics and academic results (see §10).

10. Assessment, Accountability, & Continuous Improvement Plan

Academic Measures (disaggregated; compared to district, state, and peers): - EOCEP proficiency and growth; Algebra 1, English 2, Biology 1, US History; AP and DE credit accumulation; on-time promotion; graduation rate; College & Career Readiness; attendance and discipline trends.

Leadership/Military/Fitness Measures: - ROTC enrollment, progression, and completion rates; leadership credentialing/badging aligned to Citadel characteristics; physical fitness benchmarks; successful completion of summer encampments; service-learning hours; mentor engagement.

Postsecondary & Readiness: - FAFSA completion; college acceptance and matriculation (including The Citadel pathway); industry/leadership certificates; enlistment/academy appointments; scholarships awarded.

Reporting & Review: - Annual public report (by July 1), school profile dashboard, and three-year evaluation submission to the State Board of Education. Steering Council reviews data quarterly and recommends program adjustments.

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11. Admissions and Student Rights

- Open to all eligible 9th-12th grade students residing in F1S (subject to capacity); no discrimination or preference.
- Full compliance with federal/state nondiscrimination, health/safety, civil rights, disability rights; minimum attendance, state assessments, and core-area certification protections remain in place.

12. Location, Facilities, and Safety

- Location: Former Timmonsville High School Campus
- Dedicated spaces for leadership seminars, fitness/ROTC, STEM labs, athletic practice and competition, and performing arts.
- Safety plan integrates district emergency protocols; supervision plans for encampments, off-site activities, and transportation.

13. Staffing & Professional Learning

- Core academics staffed by SC-certified teachers; electives and leadership/military/fitness staffed by certified or approved expert practitioners per waivers and district HR standards.
- The principal/director and any assistant principals will hold all SC certifications required for their respective positions. No flexibility or exemption from administrator certification requirements is requested.
- Professional learning in leadership pedagogy, experiential learning, safety/encampment protocols, DE alignment, and data-driven instruction; collaboration with The Citadel for faculty development.

14. Family & Community Engagement

- Regular family briefings, cadet leadership showcases, service-learning exhibitions, and partner spotlights.
- Advisory representation from The Citadel, families, alumni (including Citadel alumni in the Pee Dee), business/community partners.

15. Implementation Timeline

- April 2026: Local board reading and approval—public disclosure of exemptions and financial model.
- October 2026: State Board action
- October 2026-June 2027: Curriculum design, staffing, facility preparation
- SY27-28: SOIL opens

16. Appendices

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Appendix A. Financial Model (Pro Forma Template)

1. Revenue: District per-pupil; categorical funds aligned to program goals; partner in-kind/financial support; philanthropy; grant opportunities (leadership, STEM, JROTC/ROTC).
2. Costs: Personnel (core + leadership/military/fitness); Professional learning with The Citadel; transportation; equipment (fitness/ROTC/STEM); furniture; encampments; DE tuition/books; athletics and performing arts coordination.
3. Financial Controls: Annual independent financial statements; quarterly budget-to-actual reviews; Steering Council oversight; public posting by July 1.
4. Maintenance of Effort Compliance. District finance and federal programs personnel will annually evaluate the School of Innovation's impact on federal Maintenance of Effort requirements.
5. Title I Comparability Compliance: If the school receives a SIDN and participates in Title I, the District will also include school in its annual Comparability calculation and evaluate staffing, enrollment, student-to-teacher ratios, and state/local resource allocations across applicable Title I schools.



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April 20, 2026

Re: The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT: A Florence 1 School of Innovation

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to offer my full support for Florence 1 Schools' application to establish The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT as a School of Innovation. As Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, I have been directly involved in the district's planning and development of this initiative and believe the Academy will provide students with a distinctive, rigorous, and purpose-driven secondary educational experience.

The application requests letters of support from the school principal and the School Improvement Council. Those requirements ordinarily presume that the applicant is an existing, operational school with an appointed principal, enrolled students, families, faculty, and an established School Improvement Council. The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT, however, is a new school being created by Florence 1 Schools and will be located on the currently unoccupied former Timmonsville High School campus. Because the Academy has not yet opened, a principal has not been appointed and a School Improvement Council has not yet been constituted.

Accordingly, I submit this letter in my capacity as the district administrator responsible for secondary education and as a member of the district leadership team guiding the Academy's development. This letter is intended to document the strong administrative and institutional support that would otherwise be communicated through letters from an existing principal and School Improvement Council.

The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT represents an innovative approach to secondary education by intentionally integrating academic rigor, leadership and character development, military science, physical fitness, service learning, and applied leadership experiences throughout the high school program. The Academy will be grounded in The Citadel's core values of Honor, Duty, and Respect and its pillars of Character, Academics, Military, and Fitness. Students will participate in a comprehensive college-preparatory program that includes leadership coursework, school-wide JROTC participation, advanced and dual-enrollment opportunities, leadership practicums, service learning, and progressive summer leadership experiences.

Florence 1 Schools' formal partnership with The Citadel is central to the strength and authenticity of the proposed model. As reflected in the Memorandum of Agreement between Florence 1 Schools and The Citadel and in the accompanying letter of support from The Citadel's Provost, the partnership will help inform curriculum development, leadership programming, mentorship, experiential learning, faculty development, summer encampments, and postsecondary pathways for participating students. The involvement



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of The Citadel provides the Academy with an exceptional higher education partner and ensures that its leadership model will be grounded in established principles, meaningful experiences, and high expectations.

The Florence 1 Schools Board of Trustees has also demonstrated its support through its approval of the School of Innovation proposal. That action reflects the district's commitment to developing the former Timmonsville High School campus as a vibrant educational setting and to providing students throughout Florence 1 Schools with access to an innovative leadership-centered high school option.

Florence 1 Schools is committed to providing the leadership, staffing, facilities, curriculum, professional development, transportation, operational support, and accountability systems necessary for the Academy's successful implementation. The district will retain responsibility for the school's academic program, personnel, student services, fiscal oversight, safety, evaluation, and compliance with applicable state and federal requirements. We are equally committed to establishing meaningful family and community engagement structures as the school develops.

As implementation progresses, Florence 1 Schools will appoint a principal and establish a School Improvement Council in accordance with applicable requirements. These stakeholders will become integral participants in the Academy's governance, continuous-improvement processes, and ongoing engagement with students, families, The Citadel, and the broader community. Until those structures can appropriately be formed, district leadership will provide direct oversight and ensure that the planning process remains transparent, inclusive, and focused on student success.

The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT has the potential to become a model for developing academically prepared, disciplined, ethical, service-oriented, and courageous young leaders. It will expand educational opportunities for Florence 1 Schools students while restoring the former Timmonsville High School campus to active educational service and creating a program capable of benefiting the entire Pee Dee region.

I respectfully request favorable consideration and approval of Florence 1 Schools' application to establish The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT as a School of Innovation. I offer my strongest support for this initiative and for the district's commitment to its successful development and long-term sustainability.

Sincerely,

Gregory Hall

Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education
Florence 1 Schools



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April 20, 2026

Re: The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT: A Florence 1 School of Innovation

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Sincerely,

Gregory Hall

Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education
Florence 1 Schools



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Florence One Schools
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
District Administrative Office
319 S. Irby Street
Florence, SC 29501
Thursday, April 16, 2026
7:00 PM

AGENDA

7:00 PM	Call to Order and Declaration of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)	Mr. S. Porter Stewart, II, Chairman
	Moment of Silence Invitation	Mr. Porter Stewart
	Pledge of Allegiance	Dr. Gloria Bracey
	Approval of Agenda	Mr. Porter Stewart
	Awards & Recognitions - Air & Space Forces Association Swamp Fox STEM Teacher of the Year, Ben Johnson -2026 Academic Challenge State Champions, JW Moore Middle School -2026 Academic Challenge State Champions, Wilson High School -SFHS Technology Student Association Team, State Webmaster Champions	Mrs. Pam Little-McDaniel
	Public Participation	
	Superintendent's Report 1. 2026-2027 Maintenance/Facility Projects	
	<u>Action Items</u> 1. Approval of Financial Statements 2. Approval of Minutes—03.12.2026 Regular Minutes 3. Approval of Field Trips 4. 2026 District Strategic/School Renewal Plans 5. Approval of April 2026 Personnel 6. Approval of Contract Renewal 2026-2027 7. Citadel and Florence 1 School of Innovation 8. FY 25-26 Budget Amendment 9. First Reading 2026-2027 Budget	
	<u>Executive Session</u> -Student Appeals, Policy JEB -Student Appeals	
	<u>Return to Open Session</u> -Any Action as Necessary or Appropriate on Matters Discussed in Executive Session	
	Adjournment	

**Florence One Schools
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 16, 2026
District Administrative Building
319 S. Irby Street
Florence, SC 29501
7:00 P.M.**

(Minutes submitted are unofficial until approved at the next month's regular Board of Trustees meeting.)

Minutes

Members Present: Mr. S. Porter Stewart, II, Chairman; Mrs. Trisha Caulder, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Kimrey-Ann Haughn, Secretary; Mr. E.J. McIver; Mr. Barry Townsend; Dr. Gloria Bracey; Ms. Carla Eaddy; Mr. Davy Gregg; Mr. Bryan Chapman; Dr. Richard O'Malley, Superintendent.

Call to Order – Mr. S. Porter Stewart, II, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

1. Freedom of Information Act Announcement

Mr. Stewart verified with Dr. Richard O'Malley that the appropriate media had been notified of the time and place of the meeting, subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance

After Chairman Stewart invited those in attendance to join in a moment of silence, Dr. Bracey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Stewart entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Townsend made the motion and Dr. Bracey seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

Awards & Recognition

Mrs. Pam Little-McDaniel recognized and congratulated the following:

- Air & Space Forces Association Swamp Fox STEM Teacher of the Year, Ben Johnson
- 2026 Academic Challenge State Champions, JW Moore Middle School
- 2026 Academic Challenge State Champions, Wilson High School
- SFHS Technology Student Association Team, State Webmaster Champions

Public Participation

Mr. Buddy Brand offered comments during public participation, commending Dr. O'Malley and the board for the innovative changes and quality of student programs. He commented that Florence has seen more positive development in the last 10 years than in the previous 50 or so years. Board members also commended and praised Dr. O'Malley for his efforts.

Superintendent's Report

2026-2027 Maintenance/Facility Projects

Dr. O'Malley presented the facility project report which covers year three of the second five-year facilities program, that includes approximately 113 projects totaling around \$4.3 million to be completed primarily over the summer. Key updates include replacing 36 air conditioning units and one cooling Tower, \$500,000 for painting projects, and media center renovations. The district is continuing the multi-year effort to replace student and teacher furniture, with Dewey Carter and Greenwood elementary schools slated for this summer.

Every school in the district is included in the major items listed in the maintenance project. Dr. O'Malley was commended for his financial leadership and for ensuring that all completed work, aside from funds for Poynor and Savannah Grove, is completely paid for. It was noted that the district is not in any long term debt, which is a positive outlier compared to many other school districts in the state.

Action Items

1. Approval of Financial Statements
2. Approval of Minutes, 03.12.2026 Regular Minutes
3. Approval of Field Trips
4. 2026 District Strategic/School Renewal Plans
5. Approval of April 2026 Personnel

Mr. Stewart stated that, without objection, he would entertain a motion to approve Action Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 as listed above. No objection was voiced, so Dr. Bracey made the motion to approve Action Items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Mrs. Haughn seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

6. Approval of Contract Renewal 2026-2027

Mr. Stewart informed board members that there were four motions to be made for different categories of personnel as follows:

He entertained a motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation for the 2026-2027 school year as to Certified Teachers, Certified Administrators, Non-Certified Administrators, and Letter of Agreement Administrators. Mr. McIver made the motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation as stated. Dr. Bracey seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, with Mr. Townsend abstaining from voting as to an employee identified by number on the record.

He entertained a motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation that the induction Contract employees not be renewed for the 2026-2027 school year, pursuant to Section 59-26-40 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. Mrs. Kimrey-Ann Haughn made the motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation as stated. Mrs. Caulder seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

He entertained a motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation that the Letter of Agreement At-Will employees not be renewed for the 2026-2027 school year. Mr. Chapman made the motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation as stated. Mr. Townsend seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

He entertained a motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation that the Non-Certified employees not be renewed for the 2026-2027 school year. Mr. Townsend made the motion to accept the superintendent's recommendation as stated. Mr. Gregg seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

7. Citadel and Florence 1 School of Innovation

Mr. Greg Hall presented a PowerPoint regarding the district's proposed partnership with The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, to form a new high school of innovation. This new high school is envisioned to serve between three hundred and five hundred students, and will be in a comprehensive high school setting. The program as envisioned is intended to integrate rigorous academics, leadership development, military science, physical fitness, and service learning, built upon The Citadel's core values.

Mr. Stewart entertained a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between The Citadel and the district together with submission to the South Carolina State Board of Education. Mrs. Bracey made the motion to approve and submit and Mr. McIver seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Pending approval from the South Carolina State Board of Education, the new campus will be planned to open in the 2027-2028 school year. The program will be presented as The Citadel Leadership Academy at BJT, preserving the BJT name for the Timmonsville community and ensuring that the "Whirlwinds" identity will live on in the school of innovation.

8. FY 2025-2026 Budget Amendment

Mrs. Laura Showe requested a \$500,000 budget amendment for Exceptional Ed Services for students, for funding through current interest earnings. This increase is necessary because the district is now serving 40 students with one-to-one nursing, up from 29 last year, and is also facing increased costs for specialized equipment, medical transport, and interpreting services. These additional expenses will be funded by utilizing excess interest earnings from investments, which have exceeded the budget by \$625,000 to date.

Mr. Stewart entertained a motion to approve the request. Mr. Townsend made the motion to approve and Mr. Chapman seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

9. First Reading 2026-2027 Budget

Mrs. Showe presented the 2026-2027 balanced budget that totals \$216,770,665, with major revenue sources including local taxes (35%) and state taxes/aid (46%). This budget does not raise taxes and is balanced, as stated.

The public hearing of the budget will be held June 11, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

With no further action items, Mr. Stewart stated that there was a need for executive session for student appeal matters, and an appeal concerning a no-trespass letter. He entertained a motion to go into executive session and stated that no action would be taken during executive session, clarifying that any action to be taken as the result of executive session discussions would only take place once the board had come back in open session. Dr. Bracey made the motion to go into executive session and Mrs. Caulder seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Open Session

Mr. Stewart entertained a motion to return to open session. Mr. Townsend made the motion and Mrs. Haughn seconded it. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Mr. Stewart moved to grant the requests of two students that appealed under the provision of Policy JEB, allowing for early admission to first grade if the age of six years is attained by November 1 in that school year. The motion was seconded by Dr. Bracey and the vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Mr. Stewart stated that there were three student appeals and he would refer to them by number and not by name.

For student number one, he moved to uphold the hearing officer's decision but suspend the penalty, allowing the student to return to the student's home school on strict probation for the remainder of the school year. The motion was clarified to include the specification that the student would not be allowed to participate in prom or senior activities, but would be allowed to participate in graduation if the student meets the requirements for graduation. Dr. Bracey seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

For students two and three, Mr. Stewart moved that the decision of the hearing officer be upheld. Dr. Bracey seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.

Mr. Stewart stated that there was an appeal of a no-trespass letter, and moved that the no-trespass order be upheld but that it would terminate at the end of the current academic school year. Mr. McIver seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Stewart entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Chapman made the motion and Mr. McIver seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 pm.

Mr. S. Porter Stewart II, Chairman

Date

Mrs. Kimrey-Ann Haughn, Secretary

Date