

# LEXINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE

## Board Meeting

### Minutes

October 1, 2019

The Lexington County School District One Board of Trustees convened in executive session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 1, 2019, in the Lexington County School District One's Central Services Building One located at 100 Tarrar Springs Road in Lexington, South Carolina. Immediately following Executive Session the Board of Trustees met in General Session in the Auditorium.

**Board Members:** Chair Cynthia Smith, Vice Chair Anne Marie Green, Secretary Dr. Brent Powers, Michael Anderson, Jada Garris, Dr. Kyle Guyton and Tim Oswald

**Media:** No media in attendance

#### 1.0 Call to Order

Chair Smith called the meeting to order.

#### 2.0 Executive Session

Chair Smith called for a motion to enter into executive session. A motion was made to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing employment recommendations for 2019-2020.

Motion	Second	Action
Guyton	Powers	Approved Unanimously

A motion was made that the board of trustees enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's Evaluation. The board of trustees adjourned to the boardroom for executive session.

#### 3.0 Adjourn Executive Session

Chair Smith called for a motion to adjourn executive session and enter into general session. A motion was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion	Second	Action
Powers	Anderson	Approved Unanimously

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**4.0 Call to Order General Session**

4.1 Notification of Compliance with S.C. Freedom of Information Act

Chair Smith called to order the General Session and said the district tapes the meeting for accuracy in preparing the minutes and is in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act as the district has notified the media of the date, time and place of the meeting. Chair Smith called on Kyle Guyton to give the invocation.

**5.0 Approval of Agenda**

Chair Smith called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. A motion was made, seconded and approved.

Motion	Second	Action
Powers	Green	Approved Unanimously

The board agreed to hear the Citizen’s Participation portion of the agenda. Chair Smith read the guidelines for addressing the board of trustees. The comments from citizens are recorded in Item 7.0.

**6.0 Reports and Action Items from Executive Session**

**Employment Matters**

Chair Smith called for a motion regarding the superintendent’s evaluation.

Mr. Oswald said that after reviewing the information presented by Dr. Little and regarding the implementation and progress of the district’s strategic plan and considering the board members’ review of his performance, he moved that Dr. Little receive an overall outstanding evaluation for 2018-2019 school year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anderson.

**Discussion:** In a statement read by the board secretary, Dr. Brent Powers said that the board of trustees conducted the 2018-2019 performance evaluation of Dr. Gregory D. Little. The annual evaluation required by board policy and by the employment agreement with the superintendent focused on the 2018-2019 academic year accomplishments under Dr. Little’s leadership. Lexington One is one of the fastest growing districts ranking sixth in the state and during the past ten years from 2008 to 2018 Lexington One grew by an average of 505 new students per year. The district currently serves 27,363 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 12 with more than 3,900 employees not including substitutes and 31 schools: 17 elementary, 8 middle schools and 5 high schools and one technology center. The district also has alternative education services designed to help students at risk for expulsion. In a board meeting held September 10, 2019, the

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board reviewed in detail the district's progress of the 2018-2021 strategic plan's key strategies, portfolio projects and strategies in design and exploration.

In open session and after a meeting to finalize Dr. Little's review the board of trustees publicly expressed its approval of his performance and overall vision for Lexington District One and pointed out his particularly effective performance in the following areas:

- 1) Passage of a general fund budget for the 2019–2020 school year that showed a commitment to teachers and to classrooms by including a 4 percent pay raise plus a step pay increase for all eligible certified employees bringing starting teachers' salaries to \$35,991; and a commitment to student safety and wellness by providing at least a 0.5 trained School Resource Officer at every elementary school, eight more mental health counselors across the district creating a 0.5 mental health counselor at every school.
- 2) Emphasizing on classrooms that reinforce the importance of career-oriented and power skills through initiatives such as Code to the Future schools (6 schools), the Google Partnership–Dynamic Learning Project, International Baccalaureate, Blended Learning, industry certifications, Expeditionary Learning, and dual credit offerings.
- 3) Increased student participation in expanded dual enrollment course offerings. In 2017- 2018, 357 Lexington District One students earned 2,955 credits. Last year, 2018-2019, 431 students earned 3,555 hours of college credit that could have saved Lexington District One parents more than \$1.7 million.
- 4) Successful passage of a \$365 million bond referendum providing facilities students need now and in the future. Two schools are under construction now, and work begins soon on the third.
- 5) Progress the district made in 2018–2019 on its two portfolio projects (areas of focus based on the strategic plan) — Project Hope and the Lexington District One Executive Leadership Program — and on its development of future strategies it plans to explore this year.

Project Hope serves both the emotional and behavioral needs of students through the use of a board-certified behavior analyst who provides insight and supervises behavior, three applied behavior analysts who use techniques and principles to bring about meaningful and positive change in student behavior, school counselor, social workers, and mental health counselors.

As part of Project Hope, the district changed its practice regarding students who had drug and alcohol offenses by including required individual and family counseling, as well as a year of random drug tests. If they agree to these conditions, they remain in their current educational environment while receiving support. Last year, the first year, was a tremendous success. Eighty

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percent of the students who participated in Project Hope returned to school still successfully engaged.

And secondly, the first phase of the Lexington District One Executive Leadership Program, the Aspiring Principals Academy, is one of the best leadership preparation programs anywhere in the nation. The work done there to build the leadership capacity of future administrators prepares them to step into various leadership roles and is designed around the responsibilities of the job.

- 6) Encouragement of teacher leaders to become informed about issues surrounding teacher retention and recruitment and to identify ways to overcome those issues.
- 7) Increased advocacy demonstrated by teacher leaders when they held a night event focused on advocacy for legislators and other key community leaders.
- 8) The superintendent's advocacy during the legislative session that included testifying at education committee hearings and serving as an education resource for the Lexington District One delegation.
- 9) Successful construction and opening of a new middle school, Beechwood Middle, this fall.
- 10) His skill in creating meaningful partnerships with private and public sector businesses and governmental agencies in order to expand educational offerings such as USC's Palmetto College for students and employees;
- 11) Ninety percent of the Pelion Middle and High School students who participated in the district's Rolling Study Hall program, a partnership with Google, passed all of their courses at the end of the 2018–2019 school year.
- 12) The graduation of the district's first immersion class boasted 103 graduates earning the Seal of Bi-literacy recognizing graduates who mastered more than one language.
- 13) Identifying another way to increase middle school students' feelings of belonging/inclusion by shifting the middle school schedule and pushing for the addition of a middle school athletic conference. This accomplishment will impact students for decades.
- 14) Emphasis on safety included the addition of the telephone numbers of the district's Tip Line and the Suicide Prevention hotline to the back of student and staff photograph identification badges.
- 15) Implementation of model classrooms and lab sites utilizing instructional practice in real-time with real students resulting in 153 model classroom visits last year with 321 teachers, coaches, and administrators impacted.
- 16) All elementary schools were encouraged to look for opportunities to utilize the push-in model for intervention services. Middle-level intervention came out of the exploratory class schedule.

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- 17) Scores released by the South Carolina Department of Education show Lexington County School District One continues to outpace national and state averages on nationwide assessments with a combined average SAT score of 1067 with 1,139-student test-takers (a 29.4% increase over the 880-student test-takers in 2018).
- 18) Lexington One’s on-time graduation rate for 2019 was 89.6 percent, and the district’s 2019 high school graduates earned about \$159 million in scholarships.

Finally, the Board of Trustees did ask Dr. Little to continue to focus on his personal communication with all of the district’s constituencies and to continue to pursue the vision and goals of the strategic plan. Board Member Tim Oswald said, “Dr. Little has made excellent progress. I am very excited about his energy and enthusiasm. He has made great progress by reaching out to students, staff, and community.” Dr. R. Kyle Guyton added, “He is the right guy for the job. He does it well and is respected by his peers.” Board Chair Cynthia S. Smith summed up his review this way, “Dr. Little has had an outstanding year. The students of Lexington District One are at the heart of every decision he makes. His leadership truly helps our students design their futures.”

Dr. Little thanked the board publicly for all they do and for their support. Successful school districts have great boards.

Motion	Second	Action
Oswald	Anderson	Approved Unanimously

Chair Smith called for a motion regarding the compensation package for the superintendent.

Dr. Brent Powers said that as the result of his outstanding job performance evaluation, he moved that the superintendent’s contract term be extended for an additional year (through June 30, 2025); to provide an annual salary of \$214,751 (a 1.0 percent increase plus 1.5% step, the same 2018–2019 percent increase provided to other district administrators); and to specify that he receive a yearly annuity contribution of 9 percent of his annual salary, a one percent increase.

Motion	Second	Action
Powers	Green	Approved Unanimously

**7.0 Citizens Participation**

Chair Smith read the guidelines for Citizens Participation and asked if anyone wished to address the board of trustees. Ms. Katherine Orellana of West Columbia addressed the board of trustees regarding dress code. She said her daughter attends White Knoll Middle School and was sent to the ISS room for a dress code violation. Her shirt was not reaching the length of her fingertips and she was wearing black leggings. Part of the dress code policy was adopted in October 1, 1972 and revised in March of 2004. Her concern is that the dress code blames a female as a distraction. It states that “parents or legal guardians have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that such attire is not destructive to school property, complies with health and safety, does not interfere with disrupt the educational process or environment or pose a likelihood of such interference or disruption.” The dress codes enforced are putting a false importance on female appearance. Girls, just like boys, learn during school, yet when a girl is disciplined for her attire it gives the impression that their education is not as important whether or not they are dressed appropriately. She wanted to know why a female’s clothing or bodies being labeled as distracting because of a particular type of clothing they decide to wear. She asked who or what are they actually distracting? She felt it was not her daughter’s responsibility to insure she is not distracting boys in class. It is the boy’s responsibility to figure out how to not be distracted no matter what the issue is and remain in control of themselves. She asked the board of trustees to consider what they are teaching young women when you take them out of their learning environment and label them “distracting.” Do we want to be the reason why boys grow up thinking that their actions are ultimately a woman’s responsibility? The district’s dress code policy is subconsciously teaching young boys that they area allowed to think that way. She asked the board of trustees to stand with her and show our young women that they are not a distraction and consider amending the policy.

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**7.0 Citizens' Participation (continued)**

Chantelle Smith Stafford of 187 Longwood Drive, Lexington. Her daughter is a student at White Knoll High School. She was concerned about bullying. She is aware that there is a process in place. Because the issue escalated quickly she does not believe the district could have intervened prior to the incident. She does feel the district could have handled things a little differently after the fact. She said she appreciated the district's response to her posts online. She felt that there is not a zero tolerance policy. She suggested that parents and students be informed about the process for reporting a bullying incident and that anonymous reports can be made and they have a voice. She asked if a letter could be sent home to parents explaining the guidelines for bullying.

**8.0 Adjourn**

Chair Smith called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion	Second	Action
Anderson	Green	Approved Unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Brent Powers, Secretary