

# Bagley announces 3-year tech plan; questions district's after-school programs; recommends uniform dress code policy

By Chuck Cook

Interim School Superintendent Betty Bagley announced a 3-year technology acquisition and upgrade plan to the district's Board of Trustees at their monthly meeting on Jan. 14. The plan would cost approximately \$300,000 per year for school years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. All members except Chair James Moss were present for the meeting at the MMS Media Center, with Vice-Chair Verteema Chiles presiding in Moss' absence.

The overall objectives of the plan are to renew and refresh classroom equipment, including updating teacher computers, replacing older Chromebooks and installing additional interactive smartboards. A second initiative would improve school complex security through the acquisition and installation of additional security cameras and an updated recording system, a campus-wide communications system and card readers for doors in the complex.

The \$900,000 cost of these acquisitions and upgrades would come from four principal sources – normal district budget allocations; the state's E-Rate program that allocates funds to individual district's for telecommunications, internet access and networking based on the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch prices; a portion of the \$1 million allocation to the district from implementation of the Abbeville School District lawsuit; and special educational funding provi-

sos from the state legislature. Funds available from the Abbeville lawsuit will depend on the amount the district is required to spend from the settlement to repair roof leaks at the school complex. Bagley was hopeful that the roof replacement would cost considerably less than the total amount available.

Bagley did indicate to the trustees the critical importance of these technology expenditures in supporting student achievement over the next few years, emphasizing the radical changes in technology that were occurring which would significantly affect both curriculum development and available future employment opportunities.

In her continuing assessment of instructional programs Bagley advised the trustees that the district's after school programs, specifically the 21st Century After School Program that was initially funded by a Federal grant, was not fulfilling its objectives of improving student academic performance and test scores. She indicated that there was virtually nothing being done to improve math scores and that efforts in ELA (English Language Arts) were ineffective. Unless there is demonstrated improvement in the program during the remainder of this school year, Bagley told the trustees that she would transfer the district funds now used to support it to summer or other more worthwhile programs for the next school year.

In response to a question from

trustee Janie Martin, Bagley admitted that certified teachers were not being employed in the operation of after school classes and that this may be a contributing factor in its ineffectiveness. She added that the program was never intended to serve as an after school child care program and that a high percentage of the students enrolled were not attending on a regular basis.

Bagley also recommended to the trustees that they consider establishing a uniform dress code policy for the district. This would be more flexible than requiring actual uniforms, but would provide a measure of uniformity that Bagley said would have the following advantages – (1) improving student focus by reducing student distractions, saving valuable class and instructional time, improving attendance, and reducing disciplinary infractions; (2) improving school culture and climate through enhanced pride and a sense of belonging, leveling the playing field for all students, promoting equality and reducing discrimination, improving student self-perception, and enhancing school security; and (3) providing benefits to parents and the community, including a reduction in expenditures for student apparel, reducing the time required for students' morning preparations, and improving the public's perception of the district's schools.

The superintendent's recommendations were endorsed by all three school principals who each provided their individual perspectives on the advantages of increasing uniformity in student dress. Bagley and the principals also admitted that there may be some disadvantages in adopting such a policy, but that – in their view – the advantages appeared to outweigh them.

Bagley also recommended – without objection – that the district schedule two open sessions for parents and the public to view the proposed standards and to voice their opinions. She said they would announce the dates for one session to

be held before the end of January and another to be held before the next board meeting on Feb. 11.

In other business –

- David Loadholt – who has been assisting the district with its reformulated budget for the current school year – provided an updated financial report as of Dec. 31, 2018. Loadholt advised the trustees that virtually all expenditures during the previous month were for salaries and benefits, consistent with the ongoing freeze on other expenditures in effect since October 2018. He said they were working with the county treasurer on the revenue side of the budget and beginning to develop the district's budget proposals for 2019-20.

- Bagley announced that the contractors had broken ground on the re-paving of the track at the athletic complex – for which funds are coming from the district's capital expenditure account.

- The trustees unanimously approved the second and final reading of district policies AC (Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity), GCEC (Posting and Advertising of Professional Vacancies), GDF (Support Staff Hiring), GBA (Open Hiring/EEO and Affirmative Action), GCE (Professional Staff Recruitment) and GCF (Professional Staff Hiring). They also unanimously approved the first reading of policies IKE and IKE-R (Graduation Requirements), and JHCB (Released Time for Religious Instruction). Bagley noted that all of the policies and policy changes were recommended by the S.C. School Boards' Association and were required by changes to SC law.

- The trustees unanimously approved new model position descriptions for the following positions – elementary teacher, middle level teacher, math teacher, science teacher, and English teacher.

- The trustees unanimously approved two separate draft school calendars for the 2019-20 school year. One calendar – called the "regular option" – follows the current pol-

icy of a start date in late August, a break over the Christmas holidays and the end of first semester classes in January. Classes under this option would end during the first week in June. The second calendar – the "balanced" option – would provide an earlier start date in August, the end of first semester classes before the December holiday break, and the end of second semester classes in May. Bagley advised the trustees that she would bring a third option to them at a subsequent meeting – a year round school calendar – but that they needed to approve something on an interim basis at this point in the year.

In the Board Spotlight portion of the meeting, the three school principals recognized their students and staff of the month.

Nynita Paul (MES) recognized the following students – Hayleigh LeCroy (Care), Jayda Perrin (Integrity), Cynthia Wells (Excellence), Leland Ellis (Focus), Kelvin Leverette and Laondon Galloway.

Gena Wideman (MMS) recognized students Tymere Morton (6th grade), Zykeria Banks (7th grade), and Chasen Sears (8th grade). Tasha Fambrough and Debbie Bryant were recognized as MMS Staff of the Month, with Jan Rushton named as the Teacher of the Month.

Steve English (MHS) recognized three students achieving "gifted and talented status" – Torrey Mullins, Justin Hodges, and Ranissa Mack. Coaches Rico Salliewhite and Britany T. Callahan recognized two students who won first place at last year's state track meet – Jordan

Brown (high jump) and Tykema Davis (shot put).

The three principals also presented Chiefs jackets to Bagley and the trustees, courtesy of the Herff Jones Co.

Public comments were provided by R. C. Holloway, Angela Garrett and Merckishia Blair. Holloway endorsed the benefits of school uniforms, summer studies and a zero tolerance policy. He announced that he would be hosting a meeting on these issues at the Public Library on Jan. 28. Garrett noted that parents seldom attended PTO meetings, that there are a number of job openings at MMS and that there is a real need for the district to focus on education. She said she was not against school uniforms, but urged the district to provide some flexibility in enforcement. Blair said that the district should not assume that the lack of certified teachers in the after school program was the reason it was ineffective. She said that some non-certified teachers in the district are very effective in teaching students. Bagley responded to this comment and said that she agreed that some non-certified teachers were well qualified for their jobs and that holding a teacher's certificate did not necessarily mean that a teacher would be effective. She said decisions would have to be made on a case-by-case basis.

The next monthly meeting of the school board is scheduled for Feb. 11. The executive (closed) session will begin at 6 p.m. The public (open) session will begin at 7 p.m. in the MMS Media Center.

## Red Cross recruits volunteers for local Disaster Action Teams

The American Red Cross is inviting residents of McCormick, Greenwood and Abbeville counties to consider becoming Disaster Action Team (DAT) volunteers, helping local families who suffer devastating losses as the result of house fires or community disasters.

"Our disaster-trained volunteers deliver hope, comfort and care to people who experienced a home fire or other local disaster," said Lisa Colby, executive director of the Upstate S.C. Red Cross. "The DAT members are an important part of our lifesaving mission."

When responding to a home fire, DAT volunteers will work with residents to provide financial assistance, comfort kits and other essentials in the hours immediately following a home fire. The volunteers are often called up to offer canteen services to firefighters and other first responders on the scene of emergencies.

The Red Cross provides volunteers with the necessary equipment and supplies. There is an initial six-to-eight hours of disaster response training followed by another 12-to-24 hours of training during a volunteer's first six months of service. Most of the training is available online. There are also periodic meetings designed to keep volunteers current on Red Cross policies and procedures.

Volunteers are expected to be on-call during designated periods of time and available to respond to help when summoned. They must also

meet certain physical and emotional requirements and sign a wellness statement.

"Joining the Red Cross DAT volunteer group is an excellent way to give back to your local community," said Colby, adding, "As we enter a new year, what better time to consider helping your neighbors in need."

Anyone interested in joining the Disaster Action Team in McCormick, Greenwood and Abbeville counties can contact Beth Marette at [beth.marette@redcross.org](mailto:beth.marette@redcross.org) or call 864-449-7281.

### Milestones

January 18 - Virginia Adams, Angela B. Humphreys, Maxine Gable, Mr. and Mrs. Neal White, Chad Wilkie, Michael White Jr., Shantae Morgan, Steve and Jean Cameron, Ashley Sanders, Clem Smith, Sam and Tonya Callaway, Blake White, Caroline Durham, Jessica Hager.

January 19 - Jamie Lindley, Quincy Bell, Mary L. Harrison, Barbara Young, Cathy Gray, Scottie Sauder, Erica Jensen, Ron Younts, Ronnie Koss.

January 20 - Zonya Helms, Shonda O'Brian, Christon Leverette, Nelda H. McCracken, Kay Wilkie, Nathan Johnson, Deborah Graham, Doug Simpson Jr., Howard Lester, James Rosby, Shirley Royer, Mary M. Lyons, Paul and Shirley Voyer, Vowcella Marsh, Steve Vlaun, Bob Osterman.

January 21 - Henry Dorn, James L. Lindley, Olga S. Milton, Susan Wright, Fletcher and Sylvia Pierce, Trudy and Charlie Keene, Everett Noble, Cornelius LaVar Johnson, Mark Pascoe, Deyhsuana Morgan, Elaine Morgan.

January 22 - Kristi C. Reed, Stephanie Lewis, Faye Barber, Beatrice W. Gilliard, C. Aubrey Parks Jr., Rev. Robert Settles, Charles Wilkie, Mac Winn, Calvin and Mammie Chiles, Lavelle Key, Carolyn Dennis, Anthony Smalls, Hattie Murcier, Bob and Mary Thompson, Maria Leverette, James H. Collins, Arline Haslam, Shirley Theilemann, Carol Grady, Robert Maurer, Jennifer Hager, Tom Bolt, Keptler Miller.

January 23 - Jim Lyon, Floyd Freeman, Timothy C. Fuller, Michael Cunningham, James W. Lagroon, Lewis Richey, Albert Leroy Thompson, Helen Thornton, Hunter Scott Barnes, Michelle Coffee, Beatrice Woods, Ronald Gale, Virginia Higgs.

January 24 - Mr. and Mrs. William Matheny, Julian Mears, Jimmie Moore, Calvin Chiles, Bruce E. Kelly, Eric New, Nikka Chatasha Morton, Albert Thompson, Sarah G. Robertson, Jesse Wideman, Russ McCoy, Carol Solak, Eddie Bryan.

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**Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting and Dinner**  
**January 31, 2019**  
Networking 6:00 p.m. Dinner to follow.  
Talmadge Fitness and Wellness Center  
1319 South Main St. McCormick, SC 29835

**Guest Speaker: Mike Ellis - General Manager Little River Electric Company**

**Tickets: Tickets are \$20 and go on sale January 10, 2019. For more information call 864.852.2835 or email [ctallent@mccormickscchamber.org](mailto:ctallent@mccormickscchamber.org).**

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