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April 22, 2019

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Dear Beaufort County Legislative Delegation,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us at the Capitol on March 13, 2019. It was evident from our meeting that each of you shares our compassion and concern for public education in the state of South Carolina. At the conclusion of our meeting you encouraged us to send you our District's priorities as they relate to legislation concerning education. Below are the priorities and the rationale for these priorities of the Beaufort County Board of Education.

School Start Date

House bills 3255, 3477, 3095, 4201
Senate bill 240

We firmly believe that school start dates should be a local decision. Starting dates affect the school calendar and thus the academic achievement of our students. By allowing us to begin school just one week earlier we can balance our semesters and ensure that students receive 90 days of instruction in each of the semesters without a gap in learning/instruction due to a holiday break.

An earlier start date is also beneficial to our high school students who choose to participate in dual enrollment courses with our local technical college; Technical College of the Lowcountry, allowing our students to complete a full 90 days of instruction prior to the holiday break and return after break to begin college classes at the beginning of the spring term in January.

In addition, an earlier start date enables our students to complete their exams prior to the holiday break, graduate early in time to begin college full time in January.

Teacher Pay

Teachers are professionals and need to be compensated as such. It's the teacher in the classroom that has the greatest impact on the quality of the instruction provided and the level of student achievement attained. The State of South Carolina needs to show that we value our teachers by increasing their pay.

Fully Fund State Mandates

We believe that the State should provide funding for any educational programs that it so mandates.

SRO and Mental Health Initiatives

School safety is a top priority of all stakeholders. By placing School Resource Officers in all schools, we send our students and staff the message that we value them. Funding for mental health initiatives must also be increased. Mental health support is paramount to identifying root causes of school violence and increasing safety in schools.

Sincerely,


Christina Gwozdz, M.D., Chair
Beaufort County Board of Education