

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of Education to take action on Oak Ridge Head Start

April 24, 2014 - The Chairman of the Anderson County Board of Education (ACBOE), Dr. John Burrell, has set Tuesday, April 29, 2014 as a special called meeting of the board of education. The purpose of the special called meeting is to address the recent board action of notifying the Oak Ridge Board of Education that the ACBOE rejected the Oak Ridge Head Start grant application for the 2014-2015 school year. Upon notification from Anderson County Schools of the grant denial, Oak Ridge Assistant Superintendent Dr. Chris Marczak and Board Attorney Lawrence F. Giordano, Esq. met with Anderson County Director of Schools Larry M. Foster and Board Attorney Sal Varsalona to discuss possible solutions before filing a letter of appeal. In his meeting with Oak Ridge school officials, Mr. Foster shared the role Ms. Haun, Head Start director, provides for oversight of the federal program. Ms. Haun was not interviewed in the external investigation conducted by the Oak Ridge School System because she was not their employee. However, upon receiving a written statement from Ms. Haun, the school system acknowledges she acted appropriately in this matter. Officials added that Ms. Haun has been helpful in establishing clear guidelines to the administration as they move forward with acceptable solutions for resubmission to the Anderson County Board of Education and to the Regional Head Start Office. It was also agreed that ACBOE Chairman Dr. John Burrell, and Chairman Keys Fillauer, Oak Ridge City School Board, meet with the administration of both systems to determine a possible outcome that would cause the Anderson County Board of Education to rescind their motion made on April 10, 2014 at their regular monthly meeting.

During a meeting on April 23, 2014, Dr. John Burrell stated "he wanted to work with Oak Ridge Schools but wanted the assurance that Head Start Performance Standards and other requirements would be followed with fidelity." Dr. Burrell further stated that "past reviews had caused him concern." Mr. Fillauer stated, "I am very pleased that by working together Oak Ridge Schools and Anderson County Schools have reached an agreement that enables Oak Ridge to continue to receive funding for our Head Start Program through Anderson County. Both administrations worked diligently and professionally to correct an irregularity and by doing so will serve to strengthen the monitoring of the Head Start program as well as continuing to provide quality education for our Pre-School students."

Board Chairman Burrell and the Anderson County Schools Administration laid out a ten (10) point assurance summary that would be added to the 2014-2015 contract. The conditions were agreed upon by both chairmen and the administration of each school district. The agreement and contract will be submitted to Anderson County's full board for approval. Dr. Burrell stated, "I expect that the action will be rescinded and the contract approved to be forwarded to the Region IV Head Start Administration in Atlanta, Georgia."

The conditions agreed to are as follows:

1. Allocation of \$50,000 for full time monitor
2. Grantee director and HR manager will participate in interview and hiring of principal or director
3. Two year probation
 - One-year probation with on-site monitor
 - The ACS school board will review all documentation at the end of the first year, to decide if there needs to be an on-site monitor for the second year of probation
 - Continue second year of probation and continue ongoing monitoring according to plans, policies and procedures.
 - If there are no issues the second year of probation, discontinue the on-site monitor and restore \$50,000 to the delegate budget. If issues arise in the second year of probation, the on-site monitor will be reinstated at the delegate's expense.
 - Delegate will acquire the child and family data tracking system, curriculum, screening tools, assessment tracking system, mental health curriculums, mental health consultant as the grantee, and other systems as needed
 - Must maintain CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) reliable staff according to Teachstone
 - Must implement the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) with every Head Start classroom, for assessment of classroom effectiveness and assessing professional development needs
 - Must maintain a congenial environment for grantee monitors
4. Mandate new director training; two days of training for staff on performance standards and Head Start Act

- Train staff on working with a grantee
 - Staff will attend all training as deemed necessary by the grantee.
Delegate will absorb cost of training.
5. Mandate training for data person
 6. Establish assistant director of schools as point of contact for reporting compliance issues
 7. Establish a new defined checklist that aligns with the performance standards, Head Start Act, state licensing requirements and a stronger ongoing monitoring plan
 8. Adhere to any other corrective action or sanctions set by the Office of Head Start or the grantee
 9. School board chairs or designees, school directors and Head Start directors will conduct an annual assessment meeting to discuss Head Start expectations and successes
 10. Upper management meetings will be held quarterly to review progress of monitoring and other information

#

Contact:

Larry M. Foster
865-463-2800, x 2800