



# JOHN DE LA HOWE SCHOOL

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McCORMICK—John de la Howe School will look to EdOptions to provide educational services to students in grades 6-10 on campus in the upcoming school year.

In their regular meeting held Friday on the John de la Howe campus, the school's Board of Trustees voted to authorize Board Chair Dan Shonka to negotiate an agreement with EdOptions, an AdvancEd-accredited education provider that will use State of South Carolina certified teachers. EdOptions currently partners with more than 1,500 school districts across the nation.

Jonathan Rose, who came to John de la Howe as principal of its L.S. Brice School three years ago, said the 220-year-old school will be modeling its educational component on campus after a similar one used by the S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice.

While the plan calls for students in grades 6-10 to remain on campus to study the curriculum offered by EdOptions, John de la Howe School students in grades 11-12 would continue to attend McCormick High School.

Dr. James Franklin, who will serve as the school's Interim President until a replacement can be found for retiring President Dr. Danny Webb, told the board he has submitted a letter to the South Carolina Department of Education asking that John de la Howe School be reaccredited.

In other business, Sylvester Coleman, the school's Director of Business and Finance reported details for placing a new roof on the administrative building have been submitted to the state's Materials Management Office to initiate the procurement process.

Shonka stressed he would like to see funding of the roofing project come from funds carried forward from this year's budget.

It was noted John de la Howe's budget for 2017-18 is the same as it was in the past year. The board then voted to adopt the budget as presented by the State Budget Office. The board also acknowledged receipt of the state's audit report, which gave the agency a favorable report.

All state school districts are required to have a wellness policy in place by June 30 of this year. Accordingly, the board accepted on first reading a new John de la Howe School wellness policy. Staff noted they were preparing to follow the new guidelines relating to nutrition.

Danny Wardlaw, Director of Student and Family Services, said the school's admissions office is busy reaching out to school districts across the state to increase its student population to capacity. Currently, staff is being recruited to operate two more cottages plus an additional campsite in the school's Wilderness Program.

The board approved renewing the contract services of a Licensed Professional Counselor in a consultant's role to provide required supervision of the school's clinical staff.

Dan Branyon, Director of Advancement & Development, told the board Oct. 21 has been set for a fall festival to be held on campus. Students will be treated to a fireworks display on campus this Wednesday night in anticipation of the July 4th holiday.

He added the school is looking to social media as well as more conventional media like billboards and broadcast media to inform students and families across the state of the services offered at John de la Howe.

The board re-elected Shonka to serve another two-year-term as Chair. Dr. Mike Griffin was elected Vice Chair and Barbara Devinney was elected Board Secretary.

Dr. Danny Webb noted it was his final board meeting and thanked trustees and staff for their efforts.

“My prayer is that you will continue to work hard and to move the agency forward,” he said.

Contingent on approval by the State Facilities Management Office, the board voted, with one opposed, to authorize the Board Chair and President to proceed with demolition of a vacant building in dilapidated condition. The building has sat idle for a number of years. Shonka said such buildings are “an eyesore and a liability.”

The board heard additional information on bidding to refurbish the John de Howe School swimming pool, which has been out of operation for several years. The board has expressed interest in getting it back into service to serve the school’s students as well as the community of McCormick.

Shonka noted the trustees’ next scheduled meeting is Sept. 1.

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