

REPORT OF THE HEARING PANEL

In the Matter of Charleston County School District Trustee Darlene Dunmeyer-Roberson

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 2026-19

October 5, 2026

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1. Pursuant to Section 2(D) of Executive Order No. 2026-19 (September 1, 2026) (“Executive Order”), the Hearing Panel (“Panel”) respectfully submits this Report concerning the three charges brought under S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60 against Charleston County School District Trustee Darlene Dunmeyer-Roberson (“Trustee”).

1.2. The Trustee timely elected to be heard, submitted a written response to the charges through counsel, and appeared with counsel at a hearing before the Panel on September 28, 2026. In reaching the findings and conclusions set out below, the Panel considered the report of the State Inspector General (“IG Report”) referenced in the Executive Order and the accompanying materials provided to the Panel and the Trustee; the Trustee’s written response; the sworn testimony of the Trustee, of Aaron White, and of State Inspector General Brian D. Lamkin; the exhibits received at the hearing, and the certified transcript of the hearing.

1.3. Summary of Findings. The Panel’s findings as to each charge, set out in full in Section VII, are summarized as follows:

(Charge 1): For the reasons detailed herein, the Panel lacks sufficient information or evidence to find that the Trustee wilfully committed or engaged in the improper disclosure of executive session information.

Panel Vote: 3 to 0.

(Charge 2A): The Panel finds that the Trustee wilfully disclosed confidential District information, including communications designated as attorney–client privileged, to third parties on one or more of the occasions identified in the IG Report, and that such conduct constitutes malfeasance or misfeasance for purposes of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60.

Panel Vote: 3 to 0.

(Charge 2B): For the reasons detailed herein, the Panel does not find that the Trustee wilfully committed or engaged in the improper disclosure of confidential information by forwarding District email to her personal email address, which remained registered as the contact address for a District vendor.

Panel Vote: 3 to 0.

(Charge 3): For the reasons detailed herein, the Panel lacks sufficient information or evidence to find that the Trustee wilfully engaged in a conflict of interest by assisting her former campaign manager in a District procurement matter.

Panel Vote: 3 to 0.

1.4. Summary of Conclusions. For the reasons set out in Section VIII, the Panel unanimously finds that the Trustee wilfully disclosed confidential District information, including communications designated as attorney–client privileged, to third parties on one or more of the occasions identified in the IG Report. Pursuant to Paragraph 2.D. of Executive Order No. 2026-19, the Panel has substantiated one of the charges referred to the Panel and found evidence of malfeasance, misfeasance, or other wilful conduct for purposes of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. The Panel’s role is advisory. The Panel does not possess removal authority, and its findings and conclusions do not bind the Governor. Exec. Order § 2(A). Section 59-19-60 commits to the Governor alone the determination whether a cause for removal has been “made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. The Panel unanimously concludes that adequate or sufficient grounds exist for the Governor to consider exercising his authority to remove the Trustee. As detailed in Section IV, the Panel understands its limited role as facilitating the Trustee’s receipt of “an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard” with regard to the charges—or to otherwise respond to the charges cited in the Executive Order and the IG Report—not to include adjudicating any of the allegations or charges. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. The Panel does not serve any formal role or evidentiary function. Having assisted the Governor by effectuating the Trustee’s opportunity to be heard, compiling any information or materials presented, and creating a record of the same, the Panel hereby submits this Report to further inform the Governor’s exercise of the discretion entrusted to him by law. Insofar as the Panel substantiated one or more aspects of Charge 2A and found that such conduct constitutes malfeasance or misfeasance for purposes of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60, the Panel does not reach or render an opinion regarding whether such conduct involved criminal intent. *See* 2004 WL 2745671, at *4 (S.C.A.G. Nov. 10, 2004) (“While officers should not be removed from office for malfeasance without proof of willful and knowing wrongdoing, it is not necessary to show a specific intent to defraud or that the involved act is criminal or corrupt in character” (quoting 67 C.J.S., *Officers*, § 122)).

1.5. Other Matters Addressed in the IG Report. In addition to the subjects of the three specific charges referenced in the Executive Order, the IG Report also addresses a number of matters, including the Trustee’s residency, state income tax filings, invoices and late fees billed to the District by her former consulting company, and her participation (or lack thereof) in the Superintendent’s evaluation. IG Report at 5–6, 12–18, 23–25. These matters are addressed in Section 8.2.

II. APPOINTMENT AND CHARGE TO THE PANEL

2.1. By the Executive Order, the Governor appointed Thomas A. Limehouse, Jr., Esquire; Adair Boroughs, Esquire; and Clarence Davis, Esquire to serve as a Hearing Panel to consider the Trustee’s response to three charges brought against her under S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60, and to consider the evidence bearing on those charges.

2.2. The three charges recited in Section 1 of the Executive Order are:

(Charge 1): improper disclosure of executive session information;

(Charge 2): unauthorized disclosure of confidential District information, alleged to have occurred on at least twenty-eight occasions; and

(Charge 3): a conflict of interest arising from assistance allegedly given to the Trustee's former campaign manager in a District procurement matter.

Additional detail as to each charge appears in the report of the Office of the State Inspector General, *Investigation of the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees for Potential Misconduct, Disclosure of Confidential Information and Adverse Fiscal Impacts*, Case No. 2026-0007-I (Aug. 2026) ("IG Report"), which is referenced in the Executive Order and which the Panel incorporated into the record at the outset of the hearing. Panel Ex. 2; Hr'g Tr. 5:16–19. The publicly released version of the IG Report redacts the Trustee's name and refers to her as "Trustee X"; citations in this Report are to the page numbers of that version. Charge 2 has two components: the disclosure of District information to media outlets ("Charge 2A") and the forwarding of District email to an email address registered as the contact address for a District vendor ("Charge 2B"). The IG Report addresses the two together, identifying ten communications to media outlets and twenty-eight to the vendor address, IG Report at 8–10, 22, and the parties and the Inspector General referred to them separately at the hearing, Hr'g Tr. 14:9–18:12, 82:20–22, 91:24–92:1. The twenty-eight occasions referenced in Charge 2 thus correspond to Charge 2B. IG Report at 9–10.

2.3. The Executive Order established the schedule and structure of this proceeding. It required the Trustee to give notice by September 10, 2026, whether she intended to exercise her right to be heard, and to submit any written response by September 14, 2026; directed the Panel to conduct a hearing no later than September 28, 2026, at which the Trustee could present oral argument and respond to the Panel's questions and the Panel could request the attendance of the Inspector General; directed the Inspector General to provide the Panel with unredacted copies of any evidence the Panel requested; provided that the Trustee's failure to participate timely would be deemed a waiver of her right to be heard; and directed the Panel to deliver its report to the Governor, by electronic mail to the Governor's Chief of Staff and Chief Legal Counsel, no later than October 5, 2026. Exec. Order §§ 2, 2(B)–(F).

2.4. The Inspector General's investigation was conducted under Title 1, Chapter 6 of the South Carolina Code, which establishes the Office of the State Inspector General. That chapter, as amended by Act No. 223 of 2022, defines "agency" to include public school districts, S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-10(1), and directs agencies to cooperate fully with the Inspector General's requests for documents and information, *id.* § 1-6-20(E). The Governor requested the investigation by letter dated January 15, 2026, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-35. IG Report at 1, 3 & n.1; *see also* Hr'g Tr. 79:23–80:13. The IG Report covers the period from November 7, 2022, through its public release. IG Report at 3. It states that the Office of the State Inspector General reviewed Board and District policies, finance and procurement records, vendor contracts, emails, and text messages, and interviewed Board members under oath, District staff, members of the public, and persons who initiated confidential contact with the office. *Id.*

III. GOVERNING LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Section 59-19-60 provides that school district trustees “who wilfully commit or engage in an act of malfeasance, misfeasance, chronic unexcused absenteeism, conflicts of interest, misconduct in office, or persistent neglect of duty in office . . . are subject to removal by the Governor upon any of the foregoing causes being made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. Before removing a trustee, the Governor “shall inform [the trustee] in writing of the specific charges brought against [the trustee] and give [the trustee] an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard.” *Id.*

3.2. Section 1-3-240(A), which governs the Governor’s general removal authority over certain other officers, employs notice-and-hearing language materially identical to section 59-19-60. S.C. Code Ann. § 1-3-240(A). Unlike section 59-19-60, however, section 1-3-250 affords an officer removed under section 1-3-240 a right of appeal to the circuit court. *Id.* § 1-3-250.

3.3. In *Rose v. Beasley*, the Supreme Court of South Carolina reviewed a removal under section 1-3-240 and held that the Governor, in removing an officer, “acts in a quasi-judicial capacity.” 327 S.C. 197, 204 n.6, 489 S.E.2d 625, 628 n.6 (1997) (citing *State v. Ballentine*, 152 S.C. 365, 150 S.E. 46 (1929)). Where a statutory appeal exists, judicial review of such a removal is not de novo; it is limited to the correction of errors of law, and factual findings will not be disturbed unless unsupported by the evidence. *Id.* at 201, 204–05, 489 S.E.2d at 627, 628–29. The circuit court in *Rose* also held that a written-only pre-removal procedure did not satisfy the statutory requirement of an “opportunity . . . to be heard,” a ruling the Governor did not appeal. *Id.* at 205 n.7, 489 S.E.2d at 629 n.7.

3.4. Because section 59-19-60 contains no analogous appeal provision, the hearing before the Panel was the Trustee’s principal opportunity to be heard before any removal decision. The Panel accordingly afforded the Trustee an oral hearing with counsel, at which she testified, presented a witness, offered exhibits, and examined the State Inspector General; caused the hearing to be transcribed by a certified court reporter; and has sought in this Report to tie each finding to specific evidence in the record, so that the Governor may exercise his quasi-judicial judgment on a complete and transparent record.

3.5. Malfeasance is generally understood to refer to the commission of an act that is inherently improper or unlawful. *See State v. Hess*, 279 S.C. 14, 20–21, 301 S.E.2d 547, 551 (1983) (discussing and distinguishing misconduct in office, malfeasance, misfeasance, and nonfeasance). Misfeasance refers to the performance of a lawful act in a wrongful manner, or a public officer’s failure to comply with a legal duty. *See id.*; *Rose*, 327 S.C. at 203, 489 S.E.2d at 628 (citing *Richland County v. Owens*, 92 S.C. 329, 75 S.E. 549 (1912)). “Misconduct in office occurs when persons in public office fail to properly and faithfully discharge a duty imposed by law.” *State v. Lyles-Gray*, 328 S.C. 458, 465–66, 492 S.E.2d 802, 806 (Ct. App. 1997). The IG Report principally relies on common-law misconduct in office and on S.C. Code Ann. § 8-1-80. IG Report at 22.

3.6. The IG Report identifies Charleston County School District Board policies as the principal source of the confidentiality obligations at issue in Charges 1 and 2. IG Report at 7, 20–22; Hr’g Tr. 92:9–93:5, 144:9–24. As quoted in the IG Report, Policy BCA requires Board members to “maintain . . . the confidentiality appropriate to sensitive issues and information, especially those matters discussed in executive session,” and Policy BE provides that “Board members and other persons attending are duty-bound not to disclose matters discussed in executive session.” IG Report at 7 nn.3–4; *see also* Hr’g Tr. 144:14–21; Panel Ex. 7. The Inspector General also relied on the principle that the attorney–client privilege belongs to the Board, so that an individual member cannot waive it, Hr’g Tr. 86:12–20, and the Trustee acknowledged that principle, Hr’g Tr. 72:24–73:4, 121:25–122:2; *see also* Panel Ex. 7, Charleston Cnty. Sch. Dist. Policy BCA at 1 (stating that an “individual member has no legal status to bind the board outside of . . . meetings”). Neither the Inspector General nor the Trustee identified a Board policy that specifically addresses forwarding District email to a personal account. Hr’g Tr. 93:6–9, 105:24–106:4, 117:23–118:1.

3.7. Charge 3 is framed as a conflict of interest. The IG Report relies on S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-700(B), which, as quoted in the IG Report, bars a public official from making, participating in making, or attempting to use his office to influence a governmental decision in which “an individual with whom he is associated” has an economic interest; on Board Policy BCB, which bars a Board member from knowingly using the member’s position to obtain an economic interest for “an individual with whom the board member is associated”; and on Board Policy BCA, which directs Board members to refrain “from attempting to personally direct any part of the operational organization.” IG Report at 10 & nn.6–7, 11. The IG Report also cites a decision of the State Ethics Commission, *Griswold v. Loftis*, No. C2014-156 (S.C. State Ethics Comm’n Oct. 26, 2016). IG Report at 11 n.10. The Inspector General testified that the association between the Trustee and Mr. White arising from his service as her campaign manager did not end when the campaign did. Hr’g Tr. 84:12–85:4, 108:16–109:7, 110:13–19. Counsel for the Trustee relied on section 8-13-700(A) and argued that an “individual with whom he is associated” requires a present, mutual business interest. Hr’g Tr. 108:7–22, 110:5–12; *see also id.* at 27:5–13 (argument of counsel for Mr. White). The Ethics Act defines “individual with whom he is associated” by reference to a mutual interest in a business in which the official or a member of the official’s immediate family holds a specified position or ownership interest. *See* S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-100(21); *see also id.* § 8-13-1300(19) (articulating the same or substantially similar definition in the context of campaign practices).

3.8. Section 59-19-60 reaches only conduct that is wilful. Counsel for the Trustee acknowledged that disclosures occurred but argued that some or all such disclosures were inadvertent rather than wilful. *See* Hr’g Tr. 44:11–22, 75:10–19, 151:3–15. In other contexts, South Carolina courts have defined willful as “intentional,” *State v. Bryant*, 316 S.C. 216, 219, 447 S.E.2d 852, 854 (1994) (“Willful and intentional are synonymous.” (citing Black’s Law Dictionary 1599 (6th ed. 1990))), or “reckless,” which is a “conscious failure to exercise due care,” *Berberich v. Jack*, 392 S.C. 278, 288, 709 S.E.2d 607, 612 (2011) (“[T]he terms ‘willful’ and ‘wanton’ when pled in a negligence case are synonymous with ‘reckless,’ and import a greater

degree of culpability than mere negligence.” (quoting *Marcum v. Bowden*, 372 S.C. 452, 458 n.5, 643 S.E.2d 85, 88 n.5 (2007))).

IV. APPLICABLE STANDARD

4.1. As noted above, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60 provides that school district trustees “who wilfully commit or engage in an act of malfeasance, misfeasance, chronic unexcused absenteeism, conflicts of interest, misconduct in office, or persistent neglect of duty in office . . . are subject to removal by the Governor upon any of the foregoing causes being made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. Before removing a trustee, the Governor “shall inform [the trustee] in writing of the specific charges brought against [the trustee] and give [the trustee] an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard.” *Id.* The statute thus requires both that the charged conduct fall within an enumerated cause and that it be wilful. The causes invoked in the Executive Order are set forth in Section 2.2.

4.2. There is no statutory requirement that the Governor convene a tribunal of any kind. The Panel understands its limited role as facilitating the Trustee’s receipt of “an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard” with regard to the charges—or to otherwise respond to the charges cited in the Executive Order and the IG Report—not to adjudicate any of the allegations or charges. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. The Panel does not serve any formal role or evidentiary function, and neither S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60 nor the Executive Order prescribes a standard of proof for the Panel’s findings. The Panel’s intent, however, is to adhere to the instructions set forth in the Executive Order and to assist the Governor by effectuating the Trustee’s opportunity to be heard, including by compiling any information or materials presented and creating a record, and by further informing the Governor’s exercise of the discretion entrusted to him by law.

4.3. The statute frames the ultimate removal decision in terms of what is “made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor,” a determination committed to the Governor rather than to the Panel. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. Because the Panel’s findings or conclusions do not bind or constrain the Governor in the exercise of the discretion entrusted to him, the Panel did not adopt a formal standard of proof. The IG Report states that the investigation applied a preponderance-of-the-evidence standard. IG Report at 3. Therefore, as necessary and appropriate, the Panel was guided by the preponderance-of-the-evidence standard. For each charge, the Panel states whether, on the record as a whole, it is persuaded that the charged conduct occurred (and, if so, whether it was wilful), and identifies certain evidence on which that finding rests, so that the Governor may apply the statutory standard to the underlying record.

V. PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE PANEL

5.1. Notice. The Trustee received written notice of the three charges in Section 1 of the Executive Order, together with the IG Report. On September 1, 2026, the Office of the Governor served, or otherwise provided, the Executive Order to the Trustee, together with unredacted copies of the IG Report and its exhibits, and advised her that she could avail herself of the opportunity to be heard by notifying the Office of the Governor by September 10, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Panel Ex. 8.

5.2. Election to Be Heard. By letter dated September 9, 2026, Kambrell H. Garvin, Esquire, of the Kambrell Garvin Law Firm, LLC, and J. Todd Rutherford, Esquire, of The Rutherford Law Firm, LLC, notified the Office of the Governor that they represent the Trustee and requested the opportunity to be heard under section 59-19-60. Panel Ex. 4. By letter dated September 10, 2026, Wm. Grayson Lambert, Chief Legal Counsel to the Governor, acknowledged that request. Panel Ex. 5. The Trustee's election to be heard was timely.

5.3. Underlying Materials. The Chief Legal Counsel's September 10, 2026 letter represented that the materials underlying the Executive Order were provided to the Trustee when she was served with notice of the charges, and offered to furnish electronic copies of those materials on request. Panel Ex. 5. At the request of the Trustee's counsel, the Chief Legal Counsel provided electronic copies of those materials to counsel by email on September 10, 2026. Panel Ex. 10.

5.4. Written Response. By letter dated September 14, 2026, Mr. Garvin timely submitted the Trustee's Responses to Charges ("Response") to the Panel. Panel Ex. 6. After the Trustee's counsel confirmed in writing that the Trustee did not object, the Panel provided the Response to the Inspector General on the morning of the hearing, so that he would have an opportunity to review it should the Panel have any questions for him. Panel Ex. 10.

5.5. The Hearing. The Office of the Governor noticed the Panel's hearing on September 28, 2026, at 1:00 p.m., at the Wade Hampton State Office Building, 1200 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Panel had invited the Trustee's counsel to state a preference between Charleston and Columbia as the venue, and counsel requested Columbia. Counsel also asked whether the hearing could be held on September 29, 2026, to accommodate Mr. Rutherford's schedule; the Panel responded that the Executive Order fixed September 28 as the deadline for the hearing and offered to convey to the Governor a request to extend that deadline to October 2, 5, or 7, 2026, if all counsel were available on one of those dates. Counsel thereafter advised that, in order to preserve the Trustee's right to be heard, the Trustee would proceed on September 28 without Mr. Rutherford. Panel Ex. 10. After meeting with counsel in advance of the hearing, the Panel commenced the proceedings at 1:23 p.m., and the hearing concluded at 5:11 p.m. Hr'g Tr. 1. Present were the three Panel members; the Trustee; her counsel, Mr. Garvin; State Inspector General Brian D. Lamkin; and Ellis Roberts, Esquire, counsel for Aaron White. Hr'g Tr. 2, 25:8–9, 26:2. Mr. Rutherford did not attend because of a prior scheduling conflict, and the Trustee elected to proceed in his absence. Hr'g Tr. 7:17–8:1. The proceedings were stenographically recorded and transcribed by a Registered Professional Reporter with Magna Legal Services. The Panel requested an expedited and certified transcript ("Hr'g Tr."), which the Panel promptly provided to counsel for the Trustee, without charge, upon receipt.

The hearing was open to the public and was attended by members of the public and the news media. Hr'g Tr. 5:20–22, 25:16–19, 148:14–22. At least one media outlet provided a live-stream video of the hearing, which is available [here](#). At the outset, the Panel invited counsel to structure the Trustee's presentation as he preferred, and the hearing proceeded in the order counsel proposed: opening statement, the testimony of the Trustee and of Mr. White, the testimony of the Inspector General, follow-up questions, and closing statement. Hr'g Tr. 3, 6:14–7:5, 158:16–21.

5.6. The Trustee's Presentation. Through counsel, the Trustee presented an opening statement addressing each charge and asked the Panel to find all charges not sustained. Hr'g Tr. 7:11–21:8. The Trustee also made brief introductory remarks, not under oath. Hr'g Tr. 8:2–9:21. She then elected to testify under oath, was sworn by the court reporter, and answered the Panel's questions, remaining under oath for the balance of the hearing. Hr'g Tr. 31:24–33:1, 41:13–17, 57:18–20. Counsel read into the record an unsworn, unnotarized letter from Mr. White, later marked as Respondent's Exhibit C. Hr'g Tr. 21:9–25:1, 139:18–140:2. After members of the Panel asked why Mr. White had not appeared in person, Mr. White testified under oath by video conference, was examined by counsel, and answered the Panel's questions. Hr'g Tr. 24:18–29:3, 32:9–20, 57:22–71:13. Mr. Roberts also addressed the Panel on Mr. White's behalf; his remarks were argument of counsel, not testimony. Hr'g Tr. 25:24–29:5. The Trustee offered Respondent's Exhibits A through G, and counsel presented a closing argument. Hr'g Tr. 3, 148:7–157:14.

5.7. The Inspector General. At the Panel's request, State Inspector General Brian D. Lamkin attended the hearing, testified under oath, and answered questions from the Panel and from counsel for the Trustee, who examined him at length. Hr'g Tr. 78:14–116:17, 144:8–148:5. The Inspector General declined to answer certain questions, including whether his office had evidence identifying the Board member referenced in Charge 1 and whom his office had interviewed, citing S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-100 and a pending investigation or prosecution, or both. Hr'g Tr. 87:7–19, 95:15–19, 109:19–20, 147:13–148:5. *See* Section 7.5(e). He undertook to provide certain additional materials: the two December 10, 2025 communications referenced in the IG Report but not produced. Hr'g Tr. 100:12–101:25. On September 29, 2026, the Inspector General provided the two December 10, 2025 communications to the Panel and to the Trustee's counsel. *See* Section 5.11; Ex. 11. He also indicated a willingness to meet with the Panel and the Trustee's counsel to address questions he could not answer in a public setting. Hr'g Tr. 146:18–147:8. It was clear from the Panel's questions, however, that the Inspector General's constraints would similarly limit the utility of any such proceeding. Hr'g Tr. 147:9–148:1.

5.8. Protection of Confidential Information. Charges 1 and 2 concern the alleged disclosure of executive session and confidential District information, and the IG Report and underlying materials may contain information protected by S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-100, including the identity of any person who reported information to the Inspector General in good faith. The Panel cautioned counsel not to divulge confidential information and to identify documents by reference rather than reading them into the record, and the Panel and witnesses generally referred to the communications at issue by date and time. Hr'g Tr. 37:25–38:6, 49:13–16.

5.9. Objections and Procedural Contentions. Counsel for the Trustee raised the following objections and procedural contentions, which the Panel notes for the Governor's consideration:

- (a) Uncharged Matters. When the Panel asked about residency-related issues addressed in the IG Report, counsel stated that residency was not among the charges and declined to address it. Hr'g Tr. 29:6–30:15. Counsel likewise objected, as outside the charges, to a question about whether the District had sought repayment from the Trustee's former consulting company and to the Inspector General's

testimony about that company's late fees. Hr'g Tr. 54:14–55:13, 102:14–103:1. The Trustee nonetheless answered the repayment question. Hr'g Tr. 55:14–56:15. As noted in Section 1.5, the Panel's findings and conclusions are limited to the specific charges referenced in the Executive Order.

- (b) Unidentified Sources. Counsel contended that Charge 1 rests on an unidentified source's account of what another person said an unidentified Board member told him, which the Trustee had no opportunity to examine. Hr'g Tr. 12:12–13:19, 149:13–25.
- (c) Materials Not Produced. Counsel noted that two of the ten media communications cited in the IG Report were not produced to the Trustee. Hr'g Tr. 15:10–21, 100:12–101:23. The Inspector General produced both communications on September 29, 2026, and counsel for the Trustee responded to them on September 30, 2026. *See* Section 5.11.
- (d) Scope of the Investigation. Counsel noted that the Inspector General did not interview Mr. White, and argued that the District's internal process under Board Policy BCC and the State Ethics Commission, rather than removal, were the appropriate avenues for the concerns raised. Hr'g Tr. 24:12–17, 50:1–24, 62:3–12, 155:3–13; Resp. Ex. D.
- (e) Post-Hearing Communications. Counsel asked that the Trustee be included in any further communications between the Panel and the Inspector General, and the Panel agreed. Hr'g Tr. 158:8–14.

The Panel does not understand its advisory role to require adjudication or resolution of the aforementioned objections, particularly in view of the fact that the Panel's Report does not render any finding on any uncharged matter. *See* Section 8.2.

5.10. Summary of Process. The Trustee received written notice of the specific charges, the materials underlying them, the assistance of counsel, an opportunity to respond in writing, and an oral hearing on reasonable notice at which she was represented by counsel, testified under oath, presented the sworn testimony of another witness, offered exhibits, examined the State Inspector General, and received, and responded in writing to, the materials the Inspector General produced after the hearing. *Cf. Rose*, 327 S.C. at 205, 489 S.E.2d at 629. The Trustee did not waive her right to be heard. *See* Exec. Order § 2(E).

5.11. Post-Hearing Matters. At the close of the hearing, the Panel held the record open briefly to permit the Trustee to submit an additional exhibit, which was marked as Respondent's Exhibit G. Hr'g Tr. 158:22–161:15. On September 29, 2026, the Inspector General transmitted to the Panel, with copies to both of the Trustee's counsel and to the Chief Legal Counsel, a letter enclosing the two December 10, 2025 communications identified as Nos. 9 and 10 in Table 1 of the IG Report, which he described as "executive session and/or ACP communications." Panel Ex. 11. On September 30, 2026, counsel for the Trustee submitted a written response addressing those

communications. Panel Ex. 12. For the reasons briefly noted herein, the Panel did not consider these post-hearing submissions in connection with this Report.

VI. THE RECORD

6.1. The record before the Panel consists of the Executive Order; the IG Report and the underlying materials; the Response; the correspondence described in Section V; the Board policies cited in the IG Report; Respondent's Exhibits A through G; the Inspector General's supplemental submission of September 29, 2026, and the Trustee's response of September 30, 2026; and the certified transcript of the hearing. An index of the record is attached as Appendix A. Citations to "Panel Ex. ____" refer to materials the Panel incorporated into the record, Hr'g Tr. 5:16–19, 159:9–11, which are numbered in Appendix A for convenience; citations to "Resp. Ex. ____" refer to the exhibits marked at the hearing; and citations to "Hr'g Tr. ____" refer to the page and line of the certified transcript.

6.2. The certified transcript, prepared by Sheri L. Byers, Registered Professional Reporter, was provided to counsel for the Trustee, the State Inspector General, and the Office of the Governor promptly upon receipt. A copy of the transcript also accompanies this Report.

VII. FINDINGS AS TO EACH CHARGE

7.1. For each charge, the Panel sets out below a summary of the charge, the Inspector General's findings and testimony, the Trustee's response, the Panel's findings of fact with citations to the record, and the Panel's conclusion whether the Trustee wilfully committed or engaged in conduct constituting a cause for removal under section 59-19-60. Each finding reflects the vote of all three members of the Panel unless otherwise noted.

A. Charge 1: Improper Disclosure of Executive Session Information

7.2. The Charge. Charge 1 alleges the improper disclosure of executive session information. As presented in the IG Report and at the hearing, the charge rests on paragraph 34 of a federal indictment of former Board member Kevin Hollinshead, which alleges that a fellow Board member disclosed executive session information to him, and on an account attributed to an unidentified source. IG Report at 4, 7–8 (citing Indictment ¶ 34, *United States v. Hollinshead*, No. 2:26-cr-00174 (D.S.C. Mar. 3, 2026)); Hr'g Tr. 12:12–17, 82:7–19, 100:4–10.

7.3. The Inspector General's Findings and Testimony. The IG Report concludes that substantial probable cause existed that confidential executive session information was disclosed and that the disclosure factored into the federal indictment of a Board member, noting that the grand jury determined that "a fellow Board member participated in the disclosure." IG Report at 7–8. The IG Report does not identify that Board member. Its summary of violations lists the executive session allegation as "[n]ot separately quantified" and states that instance-level detail was not provided in the source data, although its findings include the disclosure of executive session information among the matters attributed to the Trustee. *Id.* at 19, 22. At the hearing, the Inspector General testified that his office relied on the indictment as a second confirmation that

executive session information was being disclosed without authorization, and that his office has never said the Trustee was the Board member it references. Hr’g Tr. 82:7–19, 97:20–98:5. He testified that the IG Report does not identify any Board member as the source, that the indictment describes the source only as a then-current Board member, and that the indictment is the only evidence on this point in the IG Report. Hr’g Tr. 97:6–14, 99:21–100:10. Asked whether his office has evidence identifying the Trustee as the source, the Inspector General declined to answer; asked whether he could say that the Trustee was not the source, he stated that he “wouldn’t want to say either way.” Hr’g Tr. 87:7–19, 147:9–148:5. He also testified that the Trustee was not responsible for a separate unauthorized disclosure of the confidential scope letter for his investigation. Hr’g Tr. 81:7–82:3. The Inspector General’s ability to substantiate the allegation underlying Charge 1 in this proceeding may be limited for the reasons discussed in Section 7.5(e).

7.4. The Trustee’s Response. In her Response, the Trustee contends that the IG Report does not identify her as the Board member who spoke with Mr. Hollinshead, identifies no direct communication between them, and does not establish that the information originated from her participation in executive session; that the allegation rests on a layered account in which an unidentified source recounts what Mr. Hollinshead said an unidentified Board member told him; and that, because that Board member is not identified, she has no opportunity to examine that person, so that the account should not be considered. Response at 4, 6–7. Counsel argued that nothing in the record identifies the Trustee as the Board member who spoke to Mr. Hollinshead. Hr’g Tr. 12:5-14:8, 149:13-25. The Trustee testified under oath that she attended the relevant meeting only remotely, from a hospital where her mother was undergoing surgery, and only to tell her colleagues that she did not wish to serve on a hearing panel then being formed; that she could barely hear the proceedings; that she did not tell Mr. Hollinshead anything from executive session; and that she did not speak with him after the meeting. Hr’g Tr. 31:5-33:19.

7.5. Findings of Fact. Based on the record, the Panel finds:

- (a) The IG Report notes that a federal criminal indictment alleges that an unidentified member of the District’s Board of Trustees relayed details from an executive session about a bid protest. IG Report at 7–8, 22; *see* Hr’g Tr. 31:5–33:16.
- (b) Board Policies BCA and BE require Board members to maintain the confidentiality of matters discussed in executive session. IG Report at 7 nn.3–4; Hr’g Tr. 144:14–21; *see also* Panel Ex. 7.
- (c) The record contains no direct evidence that the Trustee disclosed executive session information to Mr. Hollinshead. The IG Report does not identify the Board member referenced in the indictment, and the Inspector General declined to state whether his office has evidence identifying the Trustee as that Board member. IG Report at 7–8, 22; Hr’g Tr. 87:7–19, 97:6–14, 100:4–10, 147:9–148:5.
- (d) The Trustee denied under oath making any such disclosure, and no evidence in the record contradicts her testimony. Hr’g Tr. 33:2–19.

- (e) The Panel recognizes that the Inspector General's ability to disclose or substantiate in this forum any information identifying the Board member referenced in the indictment may be limited by the confidentiality provisions of Title 1, Chapter 6 of the South Carolina Code, *see* S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-100, and by the requirement of secrecy in connection with grand jury proceedings, *see* Fed. R. Crim. P. 6(e)(2)–(3); S.C. Code Ann. § 14-7-1720; *see also* Hr'g Tr. 95:17–19, 98:5–6, 147:25–148:1. The Panel draws no inference from those limitations in either direction. The absence of such evidence from this record does not establish that the Trustee was not the Board member referenced in the indictment; it establishes only that the record before the Panel does not demonstrate that the Trustee was the source of the cited disclosure.

7.6. Conclusion. The Panel finds that the record does not establish that the Trustee wilfully committed or engaged in conduct constituting a cause for removal under S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60, as articulated in Charge 1, because the record before the Panel, which may be limited for the reasons stated in Section 7.5(e), does not establish that the Trustee was the Board member who disclosed the executive session information.

B. Charge 2A: Disclosure of Confidential Information to Media Outlets

7.7. The Charge. Charge 2A alleges that the Trustee disclosed confidential District information to media outlets. Table 1 of the IG Report identifies ten communications from the Trustee's District email account to two media outlets, Live 5 News (WCSC) and *The Post and Courier*: one on August 4, 2023; two on March 5, 2024; one each on December 5 and 6, 2025; and five on December 10, 2025. IG Report at 9. Eight were included in the materials produced to the Trustee; the last two, sent December 10, 2025, at 4:36 p.m. and 4:44 p.m. (Table 1, Nos. 9 and 10), were referenced in the Report but inadvertently omitted from the accompanying production. *Id.*; Hr'g Tr. 14:24–15:13, 100:12–101:23. The Inspector General produced Nos. 9 and 10 on September 29, 2026. Panel Ex. 11. As produced, No. 9 is an email the Trustee sent from her District account to a Live 5 News reporter at 4:36 p.m., forwarding portions of an email thread, and No. 10 is the reporter's reply at 4:44 p.m. acknowledging receipt, which quotes the Trustee's forwarded message. *Id.* The first three communications concern a renovation project at St. Johns, the naming of a District 9 school, and a State Department of Education FOIA request relating to the Superintendent. Hr'g Tr. 43:25–45:21, 88:5–90:18. The remainder, sent December 5 through 10, 2025, forward portions of an email thread that includes communications to or from counsel to the Board bearing an attorney–client designation. Hr'g Tr. 34:1–14, 73:16–75:9, 91:15–23.

7.8. The Inspector General's Findings and Testimony. The IG Report finds that the Trustee disclosed confidential information and attorney–client privileged communications to news media outlets on ten occasions, in violation of Board Policies BCA and BE, and characterizes those disclosures as misconduct in office. IG Report at 9, 19–24. The Inspector General testified that his office treats executive session information and attorney–client privileged information as interchangeable for this purpose; that the December 2025 communications were treated as confidential because of the attorney–client privilege; and that the Trustee could not waive the Board's privilege by forwarding the material. Hr'g Tr. 80:14–20, 82:23–83:2, 86:12–20, 91:15–

23. As to the first three communications, he testified that his concerns were that the Trustee communicated directly with the media without copying the Superintendent, that one communication was distributed to all Board members in a manner raising a public-meeting issue, and that the District had identified the communications as confidential, although he did not know when. Hr’g Tr. 88:12–91:14. In transmitting Nos. 9 and 10 after the hearing, the Inspector General described them as “executive session and/or ACP communications.” Panel Ex. 11.

7.9. The Trustee’s Response. In her Response, the Trustee contends that the relevant inquiry is the content of each communication rather than the identity of its recipient; that eight of the ten communications concerned matters already public through Board action, news coverage, or public commentary, including, as to the December 2025 communications, a published commentary by the District’s chief financial officer and related public comments concerning her dissenting vote on the Superintendent’s contract; and that the two communications not then produced could not support the charge. Response at 3–5, 7–8. The Response acknowledges that FOIA does not eliminate otherwise lawful confidentiality requirements, the attorney-client privilege, or executive session restrictions. *Id.* at 6. Counsel argued that eight of the communications concerned matters already public through Board action, news coverage, or social media, and that the two unproduced communications cannot support a finding. Hr’g Tr. 14:9–16:13, 34:15–35:8, 150:1–15. In support, counsel offered a newspaper column that the Trustee contends prompted the December 2025 thread. Resp. Ex. A; Hr’g Tr. 39:11–40:13. The Trustee testified that the first three communications responded to media inquiries about matters already public, Hr’g Tr. 43:25–45:21; that the December 2025 thread began with her own request for counsel’s advice about public commentary concerning her by a District official, Hr’g Tr. 41:18–42:13, 72:16–23, 76:14–78:8; that the attorney-client designation was added later by the Superintendent, Hr’g Tr. 72:24–73:23, 74:9–24; and that she did not read the privilege notice at the bottom of counsel’s emails, Hr’g Tr. 119:13–23. She acknowledged that she could not waive the privilege for the Board. Hr’g Tr. 72:24–73:4, 121:25–122:2. In closing, counsel acknowledged that a disclosure occurred but argued that it was inadvertent and not wilful. Hr’g Tr. 75:10–19, 151:3–15. In her post-hearing response, the Trustee contends that the December 10, 2025 communication to Live 5 News concerned questions raised by other Trustees about FOIA and the procedures surrounding an executive session, and the Superintendent’s response addressing whether the November 2025 executive session had been properly noticed and reconvened, rather than the substance of the Board’s executive session deliberations or attorney-client legal advice; that the Trustee initiated the December 5–10 correspondence; and that the inclusion of “ACP” and “Executive Session” in a subject line changed during the exchange does not establish that privileged or confidential information was transmitted. Panel Ex. 12.

7.10. Findings of Fact. Based on the record, the Panel finds:

- (a) As to the December 2025 communications, the copies in the record show one or more communications from counsel to the Board, which included an attorney-client designation when sent. Hr’g Tr. 73:16–75:9. The Trustee forwarded portions of that thread to a reporter. Hr’g Tr. 35:9–37:11, 77:21–78:8. In at least one instance, an exchange in which other Board members posed a question, directly or indirectly, to counsel was forwarded to a reporter the same afternoon; the Trustee

testified that those members were asking a general question rather than seeking legal advice. Hr’g Tr. 35:9–36:1, 42:21–24, 72:16–23; *see also* Panel Ex. 3.

- (b) The Trustee did not identify any public source disclosing the content of counsel’s communications, as distinct from their general subject matter. Hr’g Tr. 37:1–16, 40:16–41:9, 42:14–43:6. *Compare* Resp. Ex. A, *with* Panel Ex. 3.
- (c) The two communications of December 10, 2025, at 4:36 p.m. and 4:44 p.m. (Table 1, Nos. 9 and 10) were produced after the hearing; the Trustee’s counsel received them at the same time as the Panel and responded to them. Panel Exs. 11–12. The Panel received and reviewed the post-hearing submissions from the Inspector General and the response from the Trustee’s counsel regarding the same. Because these communications were not provided in advance of (or during) the hearing, the Panel did not consider either communication in reaching its findings and conclusions.
- (d) The Panel finds that the Trustee’s disclosures, at least with respect to one or more items in Table 1 of the IG Report were wilful, considering the attorney–client designation on emails to or from counsel, the notice not to forward them without permission, the Trustee’s acknowledgment that she could not waive the privilege, and her stated purpose of responding to public criticism. Hr’g Tr. 72:24–73:4, 77:21–78:8, 119:13–23, 151:3–15; *see, e.g.*, IG Report at 9, Table 1, No. 5.

7.11. Conclusion. The Panel finds that the Trustee wilfully disclosed confidential District information, including communications designated as attorney–client privileged, to third parties on one or more of the occasions identified in the Inspector General’s Report, and that such conduct constitutes malfeasance or misfeasance for purposes of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. *Cf. Paladino v. Board of Education for City of Buffalo Public School District*, 183 A.D.3d 1043, 124 N.Y.S.3d 409 (3d Dep’t 2020). Insofar as the Panel has substantiated one or more aspects of Charge 2A and found that such conduct constitutes malfeasance or misfeasance for purposes of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60, the Panel does not reach or render an opinion regarding whether such conduct involved criminal intent. *See* 2004 WL 2745671, at *4 (S.C.A.G. Nov. 10, 2004) (“While officers should not be removed from office for malfeasance without proof of willful and knowing wrongdoing, it is not necessary to show a specific intent to defraud or that the involved act is criminal or corrupt in character” (quoting 67 C. J. S., Officers, § 122)).

C. Charge 2B: Forwarding of District Email to a Vendor Email Address

7.12. The Charge. Charge 2B alleges that the Trustee disclosed confidential District information to a District vendor by forwarding emails from her District account to a Gmail address registered as the contact address for Next Level Educational Services, LLC (“Next Level”), a consulting company through which the Trustee previously provided services to the District. IG Report at 8–9; Hr’g Tr. 16:14–17:3, 83:5–17. Table 2 of the IG Report identifies twenty-eight such emails sent between February 15, 2023, and December 10, 2025, ten of which (Nos. 19

through 28) were sent between December 3 and December 10, 2025, the same period as the December 2025 media communications at issue in Charge 2A. IG Report at 9–10.

7.13. The Inspector General’s Findings and Testimony. The IG Report states that, from the District’s perspective, the Gmail address “was not a personal email address but was the registered official contact for a District vendor,” and concludes that by forwarding confidential and privileged Board information to it, the Trustee violated her fiduciary duties, gave the vendor inside information, and afforded it an unfair advantage. IG Report at 9. The IG Report identifies only two other instances in which Board members forwarded District email to personal addresses. *Id.* at 8. The Inspector General testified that the Gmail address remained the vendor contact address in the South Carolina Enterprise Vendor System on the morning of the hearing and was the address the District used to notify the company of its suspension; that the Trustee remained a District vendor, whether dormant or active; and that once email leaves the District’s system, his office cannot determine where it goes or whether anyone other than the Trustee received it. Hr’g Tr. 83:5–84:2, 103:2–105:8. He clarified that the IG Report’s statement that the forwarding gave a vendor an unfair advantage was based not on the content of the emails but on their being sent to a vendor address, and that his central concern was that privileged material left the District’s system at all, whether to a personal account or to the media. Hr’g Tr. 93:10–95:2, 105:9–106:8, 112:3–113:22. He did not identify a written policy prohibiting the forwarding of District email to a personal account, but undertook to provide one. Hr’g Tr. 93:6–9, 105:24–106:4.

7.14. The Trustee’s Response. In her Response, the Trustee contends that the Gmail account is her personally controlled account; that although the address had historically been listed as a contact for Next Level, she stopped providing services to the District through Next Level in March 2022, and no District vendor business was conducted through the account during the period at issue; that forwarding a communication between two accounts she controls does not establish disclosure to a separate vendor or third party; and that she complied with the District’s policies and procedures regarding self-forwarding of email at all times. Response at 2, 9. The Trustee testified that the Gmail address is her personal account, to which only she has access; that she also used it while a vendor; that her consulting work for the District ended in March 2022, with a final payment in June 2022; and that she had no business with the District as a vendor after March 2022. Hr’g Tr. 46:7–23, 55:21–56:18, 122:22–25. She testified that she forwarded the emails to herself for preservation because District email is deleted over time; that no Board policy or orientation addresses forwarding District emails to personal email addresses; that other Board members do the same; that no one else had access to her Gmail account; and that, apart from the media communications addressed in Charge 2A, she did not forward any of the emails to anyone else. Hr’g Tr. 117:7–120:25, 122:4–24. Counsel argued that forwarding between two accounts controlled by the same person is not a disclosure to a vendor or other third party. Hr’g Tr. 16:14–18:12, 151:16–153:3. The Trustee offered the District’s Acceptable Use of Technology policy. Resp. Ex. G.

7.15. Findings of Fact. Based on the record, the Panel finds:

- (a) The Gmail address to which the emails were forwarded is the Trustee’s personal account, to which the Trustee testified no one else has access, and it remained

registered as the vendor contact address for her former consulting company as of the date of the hearing. Hr’g Tr. 46:7–16, 83:5–17, 122:22–25.

- (b) The Trustee’s consulting work for the District ended in March 2022; she took office as a Trustee in November 2022; and the email forwarding at issue began in February 2023. IG Report at 4, 9; Hr’g Tr. 46:17–23, 56:16–18, 102:2–9.
- (c) The record contains no evidence that any person other than the Trustee received the forwarded emails. Hr’g Tr. 103:2–16, 122:4–21.

7.16. Conclusion. For the reasons detailed herein, the Panel does not find that the Trustee wilfully committed or engaged in the improper disclosure of confidential information by forwarding District email to her personal email address, which remained registered as the contact address for a District vendor.

D. Charge 3: Conflict of Interest

7.17. The Charge. Charge 3 alleges a conflict of interest arising from assistance the Trustee allegedly gave to her former campaign manager, Aaron White, in a District procurement matter. The charge centers on a May 5, 2023 email in which the Trustee introduced Mr. White, an alumnus of St. Johns High School, to the school’s principal. IG Report at 10; Hr’g Tr. 18:13–19:1, 85:10–16, 95:5–13. Mr. White’s organization, the Circle of Life Foundation, a nonprofit registered on March 29, 2023, of which he is executive director and president, later provided mentoring and mental health services to students at St. Johns and Haut Gap as a District vendor, at a rate of \$216 per pupil-hour. IG Report at 10, 18–19; Hr’g Tr. 23:2–18, 67:5–24, 85:13–16.

7.18. The Inspector General’s Findings and Testimony. The IG Report states that the Trustee, using her District email, “directed a District school principal to meet with the vendor and ‘let him know your availability the week of May 15,’” and that, as a result, Mr. White secured a visit to the school lasting more than five hours. IG Report at 10–11. It identifies campaign disclosure records reflecting Mr. White’s service as the Trustee’s 2022 campaign manager, including an \$8,000 campaign management fee, and concludes that the email violated Board Policies BCB and BCA and potentially section 8-13-700(B). *Id.* at 11 & n.9. The IG Report also describes irregularities in the ensuing procurement: a District administrator questioned the proposal on July 20, 2023; the District advertised Solicitation P2419 on January 12, 2024; Mr. White visited a District school during the open solicitation period and afterward submitted a revised proposal, an opportunity not afforded other offerors; he included in his response a letter of support solicited from a District employee; and the District issued an intent to award but no contract. *Id.* at 18 & nn.17–18. The IG Report characterizes the email as undue influence through direct contact with a principal, constituting misconduct in office and misfeasance. *Id.* at 21, 23–24. The Inspector General testified that the association between the Trustee and Mr. White arising from his service as her campaign manager did not end with the campaign; that his office found no current business relationship or exchange of funds between them; that the introduction bypassed the Superintendent and, by virtue of the Trustee’s position, carried an implied pressure on District staff without any directive; that the pressure described in the IG Report was based solely on the

May 5 email; and that his office has information from at least one person who stated that he or she felt pressure from the Trustee. Hr’g Tr. 85:17–86:6, 95:5–13, 96:7–20, 108:23–111:8. He testified that Mr. White’s proposal was under internal review by July 2023, that an internal reviewer questioned whether it offered anything District staff could not provide, and that Mr. White had access to the schools that other vendors did not. Hr’g Tr. 145:2–18. He also testified that a District employee sent Mr. White a letter of support on May 8, 2023, on which the Trustee was blind copied; that letter is not in the IG Report. Hr’g Tr. 86:7–11, 95:21–96:6. He acknowledged that the principal had no decision-making authority over the eventual request for proposals and that he knew of no evidence that the principal sought to influence the award. Hr’g Tr. 115:8–116:17.

7.19. The Trustee’s Response. In her Response, the Trustee contends that the May 5, 2023 email merely introduced Mr. White, an alumnus, to the school’s new principal so that they could meet if the principal was available; that it did not direct the principal to hire Mr. White, award a contract, alter a procurement process, or spend District funds; that she did not participate in drafting a solicitation, evaluating proposals, negotiating terms, approving invoices, or directing staff, and that no Board decision on the contract was required; and that Mr. White’s prior service as her campaign manager, for which the campaign paid him \$8,000 and reimbursed an \$850 catering expense, does not by itself establish an improper use of office. Response at 2, 9–10. The Response also states that the Circle of Life Foundation did not yet exist when the email was sent, *id.* at 2, 5, 9, a statement counsel corrected at the hearing, Hr’g Tr. 19:7–16; *see also* IG Report at 18 (registration on March 29, 2023). The Trustee testified that the May 5 email, which also congratulated the principal on an honor, was her only communication with the principal about Mr. White; that she did not discuss Mr. White or his program with the principal or any other District employee; that she understood Mr. White intended to offer volunteer services as an alumnus following the death of a student in the community; that she was not involved in, notified of, or aware at the time of the procurement; and that she did not recall receiving the May 8 letter of support. Hr’g Tr. 47:1–49:12, 51:5–14, 123:2–11, 126:20–129:11, 133:15–19, 136:2–138:16. She testified that copying the Superintendent on communications with District chiefs is an informal practice rather than a written policy, and that Board members routinely email principals directly. Hr’g Tr. 123:12–125:21. Mr. White testified under oath that he had no financial arrangement with the Trustee after the 2022 campaign; that she did not ask him to form the Circle of Life Foundation, assist with any proposal, provide nonpublic information, communicate with or pressure District employees on his behalf, or participate in negotiating or paying for the contract; that he gave her nothing of value; that he never discussed the contract with her; and that the Inspector General never interviewed him. Hr’g Tr. 59:4–62:12, 64:10–67:4. Counsel offered an email thread among District staff from June 2023 concerning the Circle of Life Foundation, on which the Trustee does not appear and which she received from a former District employee about three weeks before the hearing. Resp. Ex. B; Hr’g Tr. 132:10–135:17.

7.20. Findings of Fact. Based on the record, the Panel finds:

- (a) Mr. White served as the Trustee’s campaign manager in her 2022 campaign and was compensated for that work. The record contains no evidence of any financial or business relationship between them after the campaign. IG Report at 11 & n.9; Response at 2; Hr’g Tr. 22:1–5, 59:4–13, 109:8–16.

- (b) On May 5, 2023, the Trustee emailed the principal of St. Johns High School, without copying the Superintendent, to introduce Mr. White and his cousin and to suggest a meeting about a program they wished to discuss. IG Report at 10; Hr’g Tr. 18:21–19:1, 22:19–23, 47:7–13, 85:17–24, 126:20–127:2.
- (c) The record contains no evidence that the Trustee communicated with any District employee about Mr. White or the Circle of Life Foundation after May 5, 2023, other than her possible (but unsubstantiated) receipt, via a blind copy, of the May 8, 2023 letter of support. Hr’g Tr. 51:5–14, 65:13–66:2, 86:7–11, 123:2–11.
- (d) The record contains no evidence that the Trustee communicated with any District employee about Mr. White or the Circle of Life Foundation other than the May 5, 2023 email to the principal of St. Johns High School. Emails from June and July of 2023 indicate that the principal of St. Johns High School opposed contracting with Mr. White and the Circle of Life Foundation at the proposed rates and that he was willing to accept such services only if they were not funded from the school’s accounts. Resp. Ex. B at 2, 5. Thus, the evidence before the panel does not indicate that the introductory email pressured him to pay for Circle of Life Foundation’s services.
- (e) As noted in Section 3.7, the IG Report contends that the Trustee’s actions may have violated S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-700, which prohibits, *inter alia*, a public official from “knowingly us[ing] his official office, membership, or employment to obtain an economic interest for himself, a family member, an individual with whom he is associated, or a business with which he is associated.” S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-700(A). Separate and apart from the lack of evidence noted above, the Ethics Act defines “individual with whom he is associated” by reference to an existing mutual interest in a business in which the official or a member of the official’s immediate family holds a specified position or ownership interest. *See* S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-100(21); *see also id.* § 8-13-1300(19) (articulating the same or substantially similar definition in the context of campaign practices).

7.21. Conclusion. The Panel finds that the record does not establish and that the Panel lacks sufficient information or evidence to find that the Trustee wilfully engaged in a conflict of interest, as charged in Charge 3, by introducing her former campaign manager to District staff or assisting, in unspecified and unsubstantiated ways, with a District procurement matter.

VIII. CONCLUSION

8.1. The Panel unanimously finds that the Trustee wilfully disclosed confidential District information, including communications designated as attorney–client privileged, to third parties on one or more of the occasions identified in the IG Report. Pursuant to Paragraph 2.D. of Executive Order No. 2026-19, the Panel has substantiated one of the charges referred to the Panel and found evidence of malfeasance, misfeasance, or other wilful conduct for purposes of S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. The Panel does not possess removal authority, and its findings and conclusions

do not bind the Governor. Exec. Order § 2(A). Section 59-19-60 commits to the Governor alone the determination whether a cause for removal has been “made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. The Panel unanimously concludes that adequate or sufficient grounds exist for the Governor to consider exercising his authority to remove the Trustee. As detailed in Section IV, the Panel understands its limited role as facilitating the Trustee’s receipt of “an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard” with regard to the charges—or to otherwise respond to the charges cited in the Executive Order and the IG Report—not to include adjudicating any of the allegations or charges. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60. The Panel does not serve any formal role or evidentiary function. Having assisted the Governor by effectuating the Trustee’s opportunity to be heard, compiling any information or materials presented, and creating a record of the same, the Panel hereby submits this Report to further inform the Governor’s exercise of the discretion entrusted to him by law.

8.2. The Panel expresses no view on any matter beyond the three charges set out in the Executive Order. In particular, the Panel makes no finding regarding the Trustee’s residency, IG Report at 12–13; state income tax filings, IG Report at 12, 23–24; the invoices and late fees of her former consulting company, *id.* at 13–18; Hr’g Tr. 54:8–56:15, 102:7–103:1; her participation in the Superintendent’s evaluation, IG Report at 23–25; the procurement, billing, and student privacy concerns regarding the Circle of Life Foundation, other than as they bear on Charge 3, *id.* at 18–19; Hr’g Tr. 107:12–108:6; or the Trustee’s November 2023 introduction of a food service vendor representative to the District, Hr’g Tr. 111:13–112:1.

IX. TRANSMITTAL OF RECORD; DISSOLUTION

9.1. This Report is transmitted to the Governor by electronic mail to the Governor’s Chief of Staff and Chief Legal Counsel, Exec. Order § 2(D), accompanied by the record indexed in Appendix A.

9.2. Portions of the record may contain executive session information, confidential District information, and information that may be protected from disclosure by S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-100. The Panel respectfully requests that the Office of the Governor take appropriate measures to protect that information in the event any portion of this Report or the accompanying record, or both, are released.

9.3. Upon submission of this Report, the Panel is dissolved, its purpose having been fulfilled. Exec. Order § 2(D). Following transmittal of this Report, each Panel member will destroy, return to the Office of the Governor, or otherwise retain or dispose of as directed by the Office of the Governor, any copies of confidential materials received in the course of this proceeding.

[SIGNATURES ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

Respectfully submitted this 5th day of October, 2026.

s/Thomas A. Limehouse, Jr.
Thomas A. Limehouse, Jr., Esquire *

s/Adair Boroughs
Adair Boroughs, Esquire

s/Clarence Davis
Clarence Davis, Esquire

* See Separate Statement, attached as Appendix C.

APPENDICES

- A. Index of the Record
- B. Selected Statutory Provisions
- C. Separate Statement of Thomas A. Limehouse, Jr.

APPENDIX A
Index of the Record

Exhibit	Description	Received
Panel Ex. 1	Executive Order No. 2026-19 (Sept. 1, 2026)	N/A
Panel Ex. 2	Office of the State Inspector General, <i>Investigation of the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees for Potential Misconduct, Disclosure of Confidential Information and Adverse Fiscal Impacts</i> , Case No. 2026-0007-I (Aug. 2026)	N/A
Panel Ex. 3	Materials underlying Executive Order No. 2026-19, as provided to the Trustee with notice of the charges	N/A
Panel Ex. 4	Letter from Kambrell H. Garvin, Esquire, and J. Todd Rutherford, Esquire, to the Office of the Governor (Sept. 9, 2026)	N/A
Panel Ex. 5	Letter from Wm. Grayson Lambert, Esquire, to Kambrell H. Garvin, Esquire, and J. Todd Rutherford, Esquire (Sept. 10, 2026)	N/A
Panel Ex. 6	Letter from Kambrell H. Garvin, Esquire, to the Hearing Panel (Sept. 14, 2026), enclosing Darlene Dunmeyer-Roberson's Responses to Charges	N/A
Panel Ex. 7	Board policies cited in the report of the State Inspector General, including Policies BC, BCA, BCB, and BE	Hr'g Tr. 159:9–11
Panel Ex. 8	Letter from Wm. Grayson Lambert, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel, to Darlene Dunmeyer-Roberson (Sept. 1, 2026), enclosing Executive Order No. 2026-19 and unredacted copies of the IG Report and its exhibits	N/A
Panel Ex. 9	Letter from Wm. Grayson Lambert, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel, to the Hearing Panel (Sept. 1, 2026)	N/A
Panel Ex. 10	Email correspondence among the Hearing Panel, counsel for the Trustee, and the Office of the Governor (Sept. 9–28, 2026)	N/A
Panel Ex. 11	Letter from Inspector General to Hearing Panel (Sept. 29, 2026), enclosing emails dated Dec. 10, 2025, at 4:36 p.m. and 4:44 p.m. (IG Report, Table 1, Nos. 9 and 10)	N/A (post-hearing)
Panel Ex. 12	Email from Kambrell H. Garvin, Esquire, to the Hearing Panel (Sept. 30, 2026), responding to the Inspector General's submission of September 29, 2026	N/A (post-hearing)

Exhibit	Description	Received
N/A	Certified Stenographic Transcript of Panel Proceedings (Sept. 28, 2026), prepared by Sheri L. Byers, Registered Professional Reporter, Magna Legal Services	N/A
Resp. Ex. A	Commentary, “Charleston Students Deserve Leadership Stability More than Ever,” <i>The Post and Courier</i> (Dec. 2, 2025)	Hr’g Tr. 40:2–13
Resp. Ex. B	Email thread among District staff regarding the Circle of Life Foundation (June 2023)	Hr’g Tr. 133:7–13
Resp. Ex. C	Unsworn Statement of Aaron White	Hr’g Tr. 139:18–140:2
Resp. Ex. D	Board Policy BCC, Addressing Board Member Violations	Hr’g Tr. 159:13–160:5
Resp. Ex. E	Board Policy BCB, Board Member Conflict of Interest	Hr’g Tr. 159:20–160:9
Resp. Ex. F	Board Policy BCA, Board Member Code of Ethics	Hr’g Tr. 159:22–160:12
Resp. Ex. G	Board Policy GBEBD, Acceptable Use of Technology	Hr’g Tr. 160:14–161:15

APPENDIX B

Selected Statutory Provisions

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-60: “Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, school district trustees who wilfully commit or engage in an act of malfeasance, misfeasance, chronic unexcused absenteeism, conflicts of interest, misconduct in office, or persistent neglect of duty in office, or are deemed medically incompetent or medically incapacitated, are subject to removal by the Governor upon any of the foregoing causes being made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor. Before removing any such officer, the Governor shall inform him in writing of the specific charges brought against him and give him an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard.”

S.C. Code Ann. § 1-3-240(A) (in relevant part): “Any officer of the county or State [subject to enumerated exceptions] . . . who is guilty of malfeasance, misfeasance, incompetency, absenteeism, conflicts of interest, misconduct, persistent neglect of duty in office, or incapacity shall be subject to removal by the Governor upon any of the foregoing causes being made to appear to the satisfaction of the Governor. Before removing any such officer, the Governor shall inform him in writing of the specific charges brought against him and give him an opportunity on reasonable notice to be heard.”

S.C. Code Ann. § 1-3-250: “An officer, other than a state officer appointed by the Governor pursuant to subsection (B) of Section 1-3-240, shall have the right of appeal from any order of removal by the Governor under Section 1-3-240 to the resident or presiding judge of the circuit in which the officer resides. The judge shall hear and determine the appeal both as to law and fact upon the record as made before the Governor and upon additional evidence as he allows.”

S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-10(1) (in relevant part): “For the purpose of this chapter, ‘Agency’ also includes public schools, public school districts, public charter schools, public charter school authorizers, and any voluntary association that establishes and enforces bylaws or rules for interscholastic sports competition for public secondary schools in the State.”

S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-20(E): “Upon request of the State Inspector General for information or assistance, all agencies are directed to fully cooperate with and furnish the State Inspector General with all documents, reports, answers, records, accounts, papers, and other necessary data and documentary information to perform the mission of the State Inspector General.”

S.C. Code Ann. § 1-6-100(A), (D) (in relevant part): “(A) If an individual discloses information alleging fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, violations of state or federal law, and wrongdoing in an agency in good faith to the State Inspector General, the individual’s identity is confidential and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the Governor, the staff of the Office of the State Inspector General, or an authority to whom the investigation is subsequently referred or certified [subject to limited exceptions] (D) [A] person commits the misdemeanor of unlawful disclosure of confidential information if he knowingly or intentionally discloses: (1) confidential information or records; or (2) the identity of a person whose identity is confidential under subsection (A).”

S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-1300 (19): “‘Individual with whom he is associated’ means an individual with whom the person or a member of his immediate family mutually has an interest in a business of which the person or a member of his immediate family is a director, an officer, owner, employee, a compensated agent, or holder of stock worth one hundred thousand dollars or more at fair market value and which constitutes five percent or more of the total outstanding stock of any class.”

APPENDIX C

Separate Statement of Thomas A. Limehouse, Jr.

I am compelled to note my concerns regarding the Trustee’s refusal to address, through counsel or otherwise, whether she has maintained the basic, constitutionally required qualifications of an elector throughout her tenure in office. I write separately to do so because the matter was not squarely presented to the Panel.

According to the IG Report, the Trustee’s April 15, 2022 Statement of Intention of Candidacy listed an address in Hollywood (Charleston County); however, the IG Report indicates that documents executed on or about August 18, 2023, in connection with a VA mortgage loan for a subsequent residence in Ravenel (also in Charleston County) stated that she previously resided at an address in Summerville (Dorchester County). *See* IG Report at 12–13. From these and other records, the IG Report concludes that the Trustee either made a false statement in connection with the mortgage loan or vacated her seat by moving outside the district at some point between her election in November 2022 and August 2023. *Id.* at 13; *see also id.* at 19–20, 23–24.

At the hearing, I invited the Trustee and her counsel to address the residency-related issues, noting that if the Trustee had forfeited her seat by operation of law before the conduct at issue, that threshold consideration could bear on the necessity or propriety of the Panel (or the Governor) reaching the specified charges. Hr’g Tr. 29:6–24, 30:7–12. Counsel objected, stating that residency was not among the charges and that the Trustee had not received prior notice or been afforded an opportunity to prepare to address it. *See* Hr’g Tr. 29:9–15, 29:25–30:6, 30:13–15. The Trustee seemingly fails to appreciate that the IG Report did not merely allege that the Trustee moved to a single-member district other than the one she was elected to represent. The IG Report instead cites the Trustee’s own representations—apparently made in connection with a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs loan—that during the term of office to which she was elected, she failed not only to be a resident of her district but also to be a resident Charleston County. *See* IG Report at 12–13.

To be sure, I recognize that the Trustee’s residency was not among the specific charges referred to the Panel, but any claim that the Trustee lacked sufficient notice of the residency requirement is at odds with common sense and the South Carolina Constitution. *See* S.C. Const. art. VI, § 1 (“No person may be popularly elected to *and serve* in any office in this State or its political subdivisions unless he possesses the qualifications of an elector.” (emphasis added)); *id.* art. XVII, § 1 (“No person shall be elected or appointed to any office in this State unless he possess the qualifications of an elector”); *see also* S.C. Code Ann. § 7-5-120(A)(3) (prescribing that a qualified elector must be “a resident in the county and in the polling precinct in which the elector offers to vote”). Suffice it to say, South Carolina law provided ample notice of the qualified-electors requirement, as it applies both to public officials generally and to the Trustee specifically. *See* Act No. 182 of 2020 (“The governing body of the Charleston County School District shall be a board of trustees which shall be composed of nine members, each of whom shall be a qualified elector of the area he represents.” (amending § 2 of Act No. 340 of 1967, as amended)).

I remain troubled by the substantiated (and un rebutted) allegation that a public official elected to represent a specific district and its constituents on the Charleston County School District's Board of Trustees may not have been, for some period of time, either a qualified elector of her district or a resident (or taxpayer) of Charleston County. If the Trustee, in fact, ceased to be a resident of the single-member district she was elected to represent, the Trustee ostensibly vacated or forfeited her office by operation of law. *See, e.g., Op. Att'y Gen.*, 2021 WL 2460869, at *4 (S.C.A.G. June 11, 2021) (“[A] [school] board member would likewise vacate or forfeit her office by operation of law if she fails to maintain her residence in the district from which she was elected.”); *Op. Att'y Gen.*, 2006 WL 981694, at *2 (S.C.A.G. Mar. 28, 2006) (collecting prior Opinions “to the effect that public officers vacate or forfeit their offices at the time they ceased to be a resident of the affected district or political subdivision”); *cf.* Exec. Order No. 2021-01 (Jan. 4, 2021) (appointing county auditor to fill a vacancy created by the predecessor's failure to maintain her status as a qualified elector). Accordingly, I write separately to note that resolution of the residency issue may be antecedent to (or obviate the need for) removal under section 59-19-60 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

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