



The State of South Carolina
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

CHARLIE CONDON
ATTORNEY GENERAL

June 7, 2001

Dr. Britt Blackwell
Member, Rock Hill School District
1268 Ebenezer Road
Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730

Dear Dr. Blackwell:

As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Rock Hill School District, you have asked for an opinion of this Office as to whether you are legally required as a Board member to receive approval from the Superintendent of the School District or from the District Office before you can visit a school in your District. You also ask whether as a Board member, you have access to all District records. It is my opinion that because of your status as a School Board member, you are legally authorized to visit schools in the District without District Office approval and that you have access to all records of the School District.

The questions you have raised are answered by prior opinions of this Office. I am enclosing copies of opinions dated March 24, 1995; August 18, 1983 and December 2, 1977 (Op. No. 77-380) which address your inquiry. As was stated in the March 24, 1995 Opinion, "a member of the governing body of an entity needs access to such records to be able to do the job he or she was elected to do."

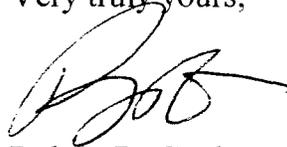
The same principles as well apply to School Board members visiting schools. S. C. Code Ann. § 59-19-10 places each school district "under the management and control of the board of trustees" In addition, § 59-19-90(6) authorizes the Board of Trustees to "visit the public schools within its district from time to time" Certainly, the General Assembly did not contemplate that such "visits" must occur only by the full Board. Moreover, the Legislature made no mention in the statute for the necessity of any "approval" for a visit by

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a Trustee or Trustees from the District Office. Clearly, an individual Board member is legally authorized to visit schools as he or she deems necessary, using his or her good judgment and sound discretion, in order to gain an understanding and knowledge of the District's operation.

With kind regards, I remain

Very truly yours,



Robert D. Cook
Assistant Deputy Attorney General

RDC/ph
Enclosures