

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2024-081

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210

RESPONDENT: Bruce N. Davis
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 253-4192

TITLE: Hampton County School Board Trustee

Section 8-13-1140, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires the filing of an updated Statement of Economic Interests for the previous calendar year annually thereafter prior to March 30. Records in the State Ethics Commission indicate that the Respondent was required to file the 2024 Statement of Economic Interests.

Section 8-13-1308, S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires candidates to file Campaign Disclosures within ten (10) days of receiving or expending an accumulated aggregate of \$500.00 or more; fifteen (15) days prior to each election; within ten (10) days of the end of each quarter; and a final report when the campaign account is closed. In addition, certified campaign reports detailing campaign contributions and expenditures must contain the total of contributions accepted, the name and address of each person making a contribution, the total expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate or committee, and the name and address of each person to whom an expenditure is made from campaign funds. Pursuant to Section 8-13-1362 and Regulation 52-504 (C), the Pre-Election and quarterly report are required even when there have been no contributions or expenditures. Records of the State Ethics Commission indicate that a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between October 14, 2020 and October 19, 2020.

Respondent was reminded of the Pre-Election filing requirement by letters dated March 22, 2024 and May 17, 2024 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure or 2024 Statement of Economic Interests have not been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1140, Section 8-13-1308(A), Section 8-13-1308(D)(1), and Section 8-13-1308 (F), S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

If there is a finding of probable cause, the following documents become public record: the complaint, the response (if any) by respondent, and the notice of hearing. If a hearing is to be held, the final order and all exhibits become public record. If no hearing is held following a finding of probable cause, the final disposition of the matter becomes public record.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan Walker Dayson who, first being duly sworn, says that she has read and knows the contents of the above complaint and that the allegations contained therein, are true and correct to the best of her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
19th day of October, 2024

Meghan W Dayson
Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director

[Signature]
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 01/22/26

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192
ELECTRONIC COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

C102form

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
)	
IN THE MATTER OF:)	
)	
Complaint C2024-081)	
)	
State Ethics Commission)	NOTICE OF HEARING
Complainant.)	
)	
Bruce N. Davis)	
Respondent.)	
_____)	

The State Ethics Commission has determined that there is probable cause pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, in the above-captioned complaint. The Commission will convene a formal hearing into the matter in accordance with Section 8-13-320(10)(i) & (j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.) on Thursday October 16, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. at the Commission Hearing Room located at: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210.

The following allegations will be heard:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Bruce N. Davis, Hampton County School Board Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO FILE A STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Bruce N. Davis, Hampton County School Board Trustee, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2024 Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

You have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to call and examine witnesses, the right to introduce exhibits, and the right to cross-examine opposing witnesses. This hearing will be open to the public as required by Section 8-13-320(10)(j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended. The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 1-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, the State Ethics Act, Section 8-13-100, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.).

A pre-hearing conference may be scheduled prior to the hearing to allow exchange of witness lists and evidence, marking of exhibits, and disposition of motions or pleadings. In the event you fail to appear, judgment by default will be rendered against you. If there are any questions concerning the above notice or hearing times, please contact the State Ethics Commission.



Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 2/5th day,
of May 2025.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Bruce N. Davis, P.O. Box 132, Estill, SC 29918 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 10th day of June 2025, by CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant

State Ethics Commission

(803) 253-4192

Columbia, South Carolina

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
IN THE MATTER OF:)
COMPLAINT C2024-081)
State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant,)
Bruce N. Davis)
Respondent.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on October 14, 2024. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Bruce N. Davis (Respondent) was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing. Prior to the call of the case, Respondent agreed to the following:

STATEMENTS OF FACT

1. Respondent was a successful candidate for the Hampton County School District Two Board of Trustees in a November 3, 2020 election.
2. Respondent failed to file a 2020 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) prior to the November 3, 2020 election.
3. In a March 22, 2024 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of his failure to timely file a 2020 Pre-Election CDR and assessed a \$100.00 late-filing penalty.¹
4. Respondent failed to file a 2024 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) prior to March 30, 2024.
5. According to the United States Postal Service (USPS), the Commission's certified letter was delivered on April 2, 2024 at 2:10 p.m.

¹ The certified letter also notified Respondent of his failure to timely file 2021 and 2022 Statements of Economic Interests (SEI) and assessed late-filing penalties for those reports. Respondent filed these SEIs prior to the filing of the Complaint and, therefore, the SEIs and any associated late-filing penalties are not addressed herein, nor affected by this Consent Order.

JK #1

6. On April 4, 2024, Respondent contacted the Commission. Respondent expressed confusion about his reporting requirements due to the consolidation of the Hampton County School Districts and his subsequent appointment to the consolidated school board.² Respondent advised that he intended to appeal the late-filing penalties assessed in the Commission's letter.
7. On April 12, 2024, late-filing penalties began to accrue at \$10.00 per day.
8. On April 18, 2024, Respondent paid the late-filing penalties assessed in the Commission's March 22, 2024 certified letter, which included a \$100.00 late-filing penalty for his failure to file the 2020 Pre-Election CDR. However, Respondent did not file the 2020 Pre-Election CDR.
9. On April 22, 2024, late-filing penalties began to accrue at \$100.00 per day.
10. On May 13, 2024, Respondent contacted the Commission. A Commission staff member confirmed receipt of the late-filing penalty and instructed Respondent that he still needed to file a 2020 Pre-Election CDR. The Commission subsequently notified Respondent of this in writing.
11. Receiving no response, the Complaint was filed on October 11, 2024.
12. Following the filing of the Complaint, a Commission Investigator contacted Respondent. Respondent stated that he did not raise or spend any money in conjunction with his 2020 election. Respondent further stated that there was a great deal of confusion with regard to the district consolidation. Respondent stated he mistakenly believed his filing responsibilities during the 2020 election were suspended given that the Hampton County School District Two would cease to exist effective July 1, 2021. Respondent further stated that he was unaware that appointed members of the consolidated board were required to file SEIs.
13. On November 1, 2024, Respondent came into compliance by filing the 2020 Pre-Election CDR

² In February of 2020, the South Carolina Senate introduced S1121 to consolidate Hampton County School District One and Hampton County School District Two into a single district. In September of 2020, the districts were consolidated effective July 1, 2021. Upon consolidation, Respondent's elected position ceased to exist. Respondent was subsequently appointed to the consolidated school board.

Handwritten signature/initials

and the 2024 SEI.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Statements of Fact, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a “candidate” pursuant to Section 8-13-1300(4) and a “public official” pursuant to Section 8-13-100(27). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Respondent was required to file a Pre-Election CDR prior to his November 3, 2020 election in accordance with Section 8-13-1308(A), which provides, in relevant part:

Upon the receipt or expenditure of campaign contributions or the making of independent expenditures totaling an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars or more, a candidate or committee required to file a statement of organization pursuant to Section 8-13-1304(A) must file an initial certified campaign report within ten days of these initial receipts or expenditures.

3. Respondent was required to file a 2024 SEI on or before March 30, 2024 in accordance with Section 8-13-1140, which provides, in relevant part:

A person required to file a [SEI] under this chapter³ annually shall file . . . an updated statement for the previous calendar year, no later than noon on March 30 . . .

4. In accordance with Section 8-13-1510(A), Respondent has accrued \$5,000.00 in late-filing penalties (\$4,900.00⁴ for the Pre-Election CDR and \$100.00 for the 2024 SEI):

. . . a person required to file a report or statement under this chapter who files a late statement or report . . . must be assessed a civil penalty as follows: (1) a fine of one hundred dollars if the statement or report is not filed within five days after the established deadline provided by law in this chapter; and (2) after notice has been given by certified or registered mail that a required statement or report has not been filed, a fine of ten dollars per calendar day for the first ten days after notice has been given, and one hundred dollars for each additional calendar day in which the required statement or report is not filed, not exceeding five thousand dollars.

5. Section 8-13-130 allows the Commission to “levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person

³ Section 8-13-1110(B)(8) requires all school district board members to file SEIs.

⁴ Respondent’s late-filing penalties with regard to the Pre-Election CDR are limited to \$4,900.00 because Respondent paid the initial \$100.00 late-filing penalty in May of 2024.

BJ #3

who is in violation” of the Ethics Act.

DISCUSSION

The Commission found probable cause to charge Respondent with one (1) count of violating Section 8-13-1308(A) for failing to file a 2020 Pre-Election CDR and one (1) count of violating Section 8-13-1140 for failing to file a 2024 SEI. Through this Consent Order, Respondent admits he violated the Ethics Act as outlined herein. In mitigation, Respondent states that there was confusion regarding the responsibilities of the existing board members throughout 2020 and 2021. Respondent further states that he was unaware that an appointed school board member was required to file SEIs.

Respondent also states that he attempted to file the requisite reports and pay the late-filing penalty upon receipt of the Commission’s March 22, 2024 certified letter, but that he mistakenly failed to file the Pre-Election CDR. Finally, Respondent states that he has been involved in public service for almost thirty (30) years and that this is his first Commission complaint.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission finds Respondent in violation of one (1) count of Section 8-13-1308(A) and one (1) count of Section 8-13-1140.
2. The Commission adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues this Public Reprimand to Respondent and orders Respondent to pay the Commission, within six (6) months from receipt of this Order, a late-filing penalty of \$100.00 for the 2024 SEI and an administrative fee of \$400.00, for a total of \$500.00. The Commission declines to assess any additional late-filing penalties given the mitigation listed herein and because Respondent has already paid the Commission \$100.00 with regard to the 2020 Pre-Election CDR.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is not only admitting to a



violation of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$500.00 in the event he does not make payment as provided for in this Order, in which case the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent with the County Clerk of Court in Respondent's last known County of residence, who shall enter this Order in the amount of \$500.00 (less any money paid) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 16th DAY OF September 2025.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION



BRUCE N. DAVIS
RESPONDENT



[Handwritten signature]