

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, July 11, 2017 6:00 p.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, July 11, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the board room of the Central Office at 410 South Farmerville Street, Ruston, Louisiana. Members present were Ms. Debbie Abrahm, Mr. Otha Anders, Mr. Mike Barmore, Ms. Lisa Best, Mr. David Ferguson, Ms. Lynda Henderson, Mr. Trott Hunt, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, and Ms. Susan Wiley

Mr. Curtis Dowling and Mr. Danny Hancock were absent.

President Joe Mitcham called the meeting to order. Ms. Susan Wiley delivered the invocation, and Ms. Lisa Bastion, Assistant Superintendent, led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Upon a motion by Ms. Best, seconded by Mr. Anders, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to adopt the agenda as amended deleting one item of Unfinished Business: Accept bids for the purchase of gasoline and diesel and adding one item of New Business: Grant permission to advertise and accept bids to purchase produce for the Child Nutrition Program for the 17-18 school year.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Hunt, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on June 6, 2017, as presented.

In her update on the STAR reading program, Lisa Mangum, Academic Coordinator, said 69 of the lowest 20% of first grade students were served during the past school year. Of that number, 71% had been dismissed because they were reading at an appropriate

level for the time of year, 13% were dismissed reading slightly below, and 16% were reading at the beginning of first grade level. Reading Interventionists served an additional 16 students, but time ran out and they did not receive the entire 100 lessons. On the new, nationally-normed benchmarking system, the entire first grade scored a 58 growth percentage while STAR students had a growth percentage of 56. She was proud of those accomplishments and predicted that even better results would be seen when the kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers have all received the guided reading training and that instruction is used across the parish.

The following personnel items were shared by Dr. Doris Lewis, Director of Human Resources:

1. Retirement of the following:

Willie Washington, Title I Director, effective June 30, 2017; and

Mary Cavender, itinerant nurse, effective September 1, 2017.

2. Resignation of the following:

Ashley Ellis, Accountability Coordinator at the Central Office, effective June 30, 2017;

Cecelia Isaac, teacher at Cypress Springs, effective May 26, 2017;

Jordan Cheatham, pre-k teacher at Lincoln Parish Early Childhood Center (LPECC), effective June 22, 2017;

Shannon Tatum, pre-k teacher at LPECC, effective June 7, 2017;

Celesta McGrew, school psychologist with Pupil Appraisal, effective June 20, 2017;

Hoff Schooler, world history/coach at Ruston High, effective June 16, 2017;

Michael Sutton, math teacher at Ruston High, effective June 8, 2017;

Matthew Moore, social studies teacher at Ruston High, effective June 27, 2017;

Caitlin Pittman, ELA teacher at Ruston Junior High, effective June 5, 2017;
and

Trina Morse, teacher at Simsboro Elementary, effective June 15, 2017.

3. Points of Reference/Transfer of the following effective August 7, 2017, unless noted otherwise noted:

Kim Shackelford, from Instructional Coach to Director of Federal Programs effective July 1, 2017, replacing Willie Washington who retired;

Lisa Wilmore, from Federal Programs Facilitator to Secondary Supervisor effective July 1, 2017, replacing Lisa Bastion who promoted;

Michelle Thrower, from Principal of Cypress Springs to Elementary Coordinator effective July 1, 2017, replacing Ashley Ellis who resigned;

Stephanie Griffin, from Simsboro Elementary to Coordinating Teacher at Choudrant Elementary effective July 31, 2017, replacing Debi Hauser who retired;

Mary Wilks-Kilgore, from Coordinating Teacher at Cypress Springs to Interim Principal at Cypress Springs effective July 1, 2017, replacing Michelle Thrower who transferred;

Lauren Pigue, from Curriculum Strategist at Cypress Springs to Coordinating Teacher at Cypress Springs effective July 31, 2017, replacing Mary Wilks-Kilgore who promoted;

Brandie Watson, from Choudrant Elementary to Curriculum Strategist at Cypress Springs effective July 31, 2017, replacing Lauren Pigue who transferred;

Debbie Conn, from teacher at Hillcrest to Coordinating Teacher at Hillcrest effective July 31, 2017, replacing Kelli Colvin who transferred;

Kelli Colvin, from Coordinating Teacher at Hillcrest to Curriculum Strategist at Hillcrest effective July 31, 2017, replacing Christine Gatlin who resigned;

Kathryn Martin, from Teacher at Ruston Elementary to Coordinating Teacher at Ruston Elementary effective July 31, 2017, replacing Mandy Brown who promoted;

Laurie Fernandez, from Glen View to special education teacher at Ruston Elementary, replacing Rhonda Thomas who transferred;

Dustin Serpas, from Ruston Junior High to world history/coach at Ruston High effective July 10, 2017, replacing Hoff Schooler who resigned;

Curtis Goodwin, from Ruston Junior High to P.E./coach at Ruston High effective July 10, 2017 replacing Shannon Frasier who transferred;

Larkin Norton, from regular education teacher at Ruston High to special education teacher at Ruston High, replacing Rexie Roberts who resigned;

Abi Gail Leachman, from Dubach School to special education teacher at Ruston High, replacing Patricia Cochran who retired;

Maryanne Smith, from Ruston Elementary to ELA teacher at Ruston High, replacing Kirby Brasher who resigned;

Elizabeth Clark, from regular education at Ruston Junior High to gifted teacher at Ruston Junior High effective July 10, 2017, replacing Maryjane Hawley who retired;

Shannon Frasier, from Ruston High to P.E./coach at Ruston Junior High effective July 10, 2017, replacing Curtis Goodwin who transferred;

Holly Payton, from teacher at Ruston Junior High to a new Assistant Principal slot at Ruston Junior High effective July 10, 2017;

Kelly Hammond, from regular education at Simsboro to special education teacher at Simsboro Elementary, replacing Renee Overby who resigned;

Amanda Chesson, from elementary teacher at Simsboro Elementary to pre-k teacher at Simsboro Elementary, in a new position; and

Catherine Letendre, from Ruston High to a new YRC Coordinator position effective July 24, 2017.

4. Employment of the following effective August 7, 2017, unless otherwise noted:

Stephanie Gantt, special education teacher at Choudrant Elementary, replacing Maribeth Sherman who resigned;

Hannah Ebarb, teacher at Choudrant Elementary, replacing Brandie Watson who transferred;

William Bandy, business teacher at Choudrant High, replacing Nicky Weaver who retired;

Keywana Baker, Student Services Coordinator at Cypress Springs effective July 31, 2017, replacing Amy Dakin who resigned;

Maria Davidson, teacher at Cypress Springs, replacing Priscilla Smith who transferred;

Amber Hilburn, teacher at Cypress Springs, replacing Laura Blaze who resigned;

Kristen Poe, teacher at Cypress Springs, replacing Cecelia Isaac who resigned;

Holly Wilhite, special education teacher at Cypress Springs, replacing Leigh Ann Perritt who resigned;

Ann-Elizabeth Brown, special education teacher at Dubach School, replacing Mary Lee who retired;

Elizabeth Marks, teacher at Dubach School, replacing Meg Johnson who transferred;

Rebekah Long, special education teacher at Glen View, replacing Teila Lee who resigned;

Sandi Singleton, special education teacher at Glen View, replacing Laurie Fernandez who transferred;

Taylor Disotell, teacher at Hillcrest, replacing Debbie Conn who promoted;

Jan Frost, special education teacher at Howard School, replacing Daniel Flores who resigned;

Valarie "Renee" Skipper, itinerant school nurse, replacing Mary Cavender who retired;

Candace Westbrook, science teacher at I. A. Lewis, replacing Sheila Malone who resigned;

Amee Brinkley, ELA teacher at I. A. Lewis, replacing Polly Durrett who transferred;

Kristy Powell, pre-k teacher at LPECC, replacing Shannon Tatum who resigned;

Claire Anderson, teacher at Ruston Elementary, replacing Maryanne Smith who transferred;

Clinton Blazier, special education teacher at Ruston Elementary, replacing Mary Riley who resigned;

Megan Martin, teacher at Ruston Elementary, replacing Dana Becnel who resigned;

Paula Smith, special education teacher at Ruston Elementary, replacing Lisa Harris who resigned;

Susan Newman, teacher at Ruston Elementary, replacing Kendall Garner who transferred;

Victoria Axton, ELA teacher at Ruston High, replacing Larkin Norton, who transferred;

Merideth Graf, H&PE/coach at Ruston High effective July 10, 2017, replacing Brandy Tyler who transferred;

Ryan Abbott, world geography teacher at Ruston High, replacing Denise Moller who resigned;

Amber Devaux, ELA teacher at Ruston High, replacing Jessica Falke who resigned;

Laura Thompson, ELA teacher at Ruston High, replacing Mikaela Fitzwater who resigned;

Jason Walker, social studies teacher at Ruston High, replacing Matthew Moore who resigned;

Sarah Wages, science teacher at Ruston Junior High, replacing Bobbi Conner who retired;

Adam Novak, science/coach at Ruston Junior High effective July 10, 2017, replacing Steven Ehrhard who resigned;

Robert Ball, science teacher at Ruston Junior High, replacing Shawn Talley who resigned;

Christine Nugent, math teacher at Ruston Junior High, replacing Avey Parker who retired;

Charles Helams, math/coach at Ruston Junior High effective July 10, 2017, replacing Elizabeth Clark who transferred;

James Watson, P.E./Athletic Director at Ruston Junior High effective July 10, 2017, replacing Dustin Serpas who transferred;

Darmecia Crane, teacher at Simsboro Elementary, replacing Amanda Chesson who moved to a new pre-k position;

Savannah Bearden, teacher at Simsboro Elementary, replacing Trina Morse who resigned; and

Megan Harrington, teacher at Simsboro Elementary, replacing Kelly Hammond who transferred.

5. Retirement of the following:

Horace Richards, maintenance position at the maintenance facility, effective August 21, 2017; and

Sterling Richard, custodian at Choudrant Elementary, effective August 1, 2017.

6. Point of Reference/Transfer of Charles Parker from the Central Office to custodian at Ruston High effective July 1, 2017, replacing Willie Patton who transferred.

7. Employment of Mary Perry as custodian at Cypress Springs effective August 3, 2017, replacing Brenda Bolton who retired.

George Murphy, Business Manager, presented a sales tax report for June of 2017.

He said \$17.2 million was collected for the year, which was really not too bad. Compared to last year that was down \$3.6 million; however, compared to 13-14's total, it was up almost \$3 million in 3 years. Sales tax collections for the year were down 17.4%. Recoveries through audits were

also good with \$241,023 being collected, which was over 100% more than the previous year. In sales tax breakdowns, he noted that collections for the last two months were larger than the same month in the previous year, which might mean things are beginning to look better. He said when the budget is prepared in September, there is an MFP decrease to deal with, so more than likely there will be a budget deficit; however, pretty good reserves are stockpiled and plans are to work on some Capital Outlay items. Mr. Murphy opined that sales taxes need to be watched closely before definite, large spending plans are made.

Moving on to his summary of the May 2017 financial statement, Mr. Murphy said figures were down \$3.5 million compared to May 2016, and compared to April of 2017 they were down \$2.1 million. He noted that the school system has pretty good reserves.

For the month of May 31, 2017, the self-insured health plan was down \$487,225, and down \$282,087 year-to-date according to George Murphy.

Regarding retirees who are part of the LPSB's self-insured plan, Mr. Murphy reiterated that a meeting held in June with those who are eligible for Medicare did not go well. Consideration was being given to a separate insurance plan for the retirees with Humana, but the retirees had some legitimate concerns and were upset. Presently the administration is trying to see if Humana will be accepted by doctors, analyzing data, and trying to figure out how to control costs. Blue Cross is planning to offer the same type of Medicare program beginning in 2019, which may be a possible solution. Something will eventually be brought to the Board for their consideration because the administration wants to control costs and have a sustainable program for the future. He said it's a developing situation.

Superintendent Mike Milstead said he also attended the June 1st meeting with retirees and pledged to the retirees that:

1. The administration would recommend nothing to the LPSB until after he had another meeting with the retirees;
2. A side-by-side comparison between Humana and BlueCross would be shared; and
3. A retiree would be placed on the Insurance Committee.

Since that time, former Lincoln Parish Superintendent, Dr. Gerald W. Cobb, has been named to the Committee. Mr. Milstead said a form letter would soon be sent to the retirees reminding them of his pledge and that another meeting with retirees will be held before any changes are proposed to the Board. He believes postponing changes would be the best solution for now in order to reduce retirees' anxiety and angst.

New Construction Coordinator, James Payton narrated pictures of numerous projects in a construction update. He noted that in general things were going well and most projects would be finished prior to the start of school on August 7.

Security work at the outlying schools was the biggest project in an attempt to deny free access to the schools. Choudrant Elementary, Choudrant High, Dubach School, and Simsboro School were all getting new security doors with thumb scans and aiphones. Principals will decide who to allow to enter by scanning their thumb, and guests will call the office using the aiphone to request entrance. High definition cameras will also be installed and used.

Choudrant High is also getting new steps to the entrance and a new handicapped ramp – both with hand rails. At the back of the school near the gym, an electronically-

controlled cantilevered gate will be installed; it is like the one at Ruston High School. A thumb scan will also be added at the back entrance to the school.

A sliding gate was also being added to the east side of the Dubach School campus; it will have the same controls to deny access to the back of the school. A lot of fencing was also added on the east side. The boys' restroom was being restored and a new restroom was being built beside it for the girls.

The approximately 31 year old boys' and girls' restrooms on the north end of Ruston Junior High, next to the Commons Area, were worn out. They had been totally gutted and were being restored. They were also renovating a boys' P.E. locker and dressing room across the Commons Area that will have new lockers and a renovated restroom. A faculty restroom near that area was also being renovated.

On the southeast side of the Simsboro School building, an electronically-controlled gate was being added. In addition a 3' walk through gate was being built with a panic bar and a thumb scan. On the east side, near the cafeteria and gym, another cantilevered gate was being added with the same two controls, thumb scan and aiphone.

Mr. Payton reminded the Board that a new roof had been put on Ruston High School's auditorium last year. A new ceiling was being installed to replace the badly-stained one. While there, the chandelier lights were being converted to 120 volt LED.

After a month of study, Lisa Bastion communicated that it was time to decide about revisions to JGCE – *Child Abuse*, DJE – *Purchasing*, and DJED – *Bids and Quotations* and the addition of one new policy, DIE – *Records Retention*.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Ms. Henderson, the Board unanimously voted to approve the following policy changes:

Revision: JGCE – *Child Abuse*;
DJE – *Purchasing*; and
DJED – *Bids and Quotations*.

Addition: DIE – *Records Retention*.

Five portable buildings and one vehicle were no longer needed, so Ricky Edmiston, Supervisor of Auxiliary Services, asked permission to declare them surplus so he could dispose of them.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to grant permission to declare the following items surplus and dispose of them in accordance with state law and local policies: two portables – size 24' x 60', three portables – size 24' x 64', and a 2000 Chevrolet van – VIN # 1GAGG25R3Y1120788.

Federal law requires local school systems participating in the national school lunch program to ensure sufficient funds are provided to the nonprofit school food service account for meals served to students not eligible for free or reduced priced meals. Better Fowler, Child Nutrition Program Supervisor, said meal prices had not increased since the 2008-2009 school year; however, a .25 per meal change was being recommended to meet increased expenses. Because Choudrant Elementary and Choudrant High School were the only two schools where students paid for meals, they would be the only two schools that would be affected by the proposed changes. The administration's proposal for meal price changes was:

Breakfast	Increase from \$1.00 to \$1.25 for all students;
Lunch	Increase from \$1.25 to \$1.50 for pre-k - 6 th grade; and
Lunch	Increase from \$1.50 to \$1.75 for grades 7 – 12.

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Abrahm, the Board unanimously voted to increase meal prices as stated above.

The State Legislative Auditor's Office requires all Louisiana governmental units to complete a System's Survey & Compliance Questionnaire and provide it to the independent auditors at the beginning of the financial and compliance audit, George Murphy reported to the Board. He requested approval of the questionnaire for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Mack, the Board unanimously voted to approve the System's Survey & Compliance Questionnaire as presented for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.

Because the state requires the lettings of bids for purchases over \$30,000, Ms. Fowler requested permission to advertise and accept bids for the purchase of produce for the Child Nutrition Program.

Upon a motion by Ms. Abrahm, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to grant permission for the Child Nutrition Program to advertise and accept bids for the purchase of produce for the 2017-2018 school year.

In a Report of the Superintendent, Mr. Milstead said that:

1. Noted a recent article in the Ruston Daily Leader regarding George Murphy, Kathy Pool, and others in the Business Department's significant accomplishment of being awarded a Certificate of Excellence by the Government Finance Officers' Association of the United States and Canada. He was proud to note that it was the highest type of recognition in the form of governmental accounting and financial reporting that a governmental entity can receive, and he issued kudos to everyone involved.
2. Every year he tries to share his plan with the employees to make each year better – remembering that the priority is the children. Mr. Milstead has high expectations of the students and of the faculties. He believes administrators must inspect what is expected. In the upcoming year when data is released

regarding LEAP tests, some improvement will be seen; however, it was still not where he wanted to be. Improvement will continue to be made and employees will continue to be challenged. One or two goals will be set for improvement each year. A specific change he mentioned for the upcoming year was: all students would make academic progress. He believes positive results will be seen from that.

3. He has begun looking at a calendar for 2018-2019 for the alternate calendar year schools, which will be Glen View and Cypress Springs. They have the largest number of students who will benefit from a year-round school. Survey results from 170 teachers showed that 122 were very interested or committed to the concept. The next priority would be selling to the families that this is what is best for the students. He believes that must be done so issues can be eliminated and wonderful things can be done for the students during the summer. In September or October he hopes to bring an approximate cost for the Board's consideration.
4. Focus Groups, consisting of teachers, parents, community leaders, and administrators, met and data has begun to be received from those meetings. The Keystone Policy Center was working with the school system as it's done with others across the United States. The final report should be available at the end of the month, but he briefly shared preliminary results. All of the groups had almost the same concerns and positives. All in the eightieth percentile agreed that Lincoln Parish schools' employees are professional and courteous when working with others. Parents rated higher than teachers: I feel comfortable sharing ideas for improving teaching. A couple of areas that he found striking as those surveyed only agreed at just over 30% across the board that: the administration of the Lincoln Parish School Board clearly explains how key decisions are made. Because of that, he is considering a teacher advisory group, a parent advisory group, and a mixed meeting with both. Very low marks were also received for: actively seeking input from diverse groups. Cultural differences involving rearing of children need to be known and understood. Good marks were also received for: Lincoln Parish ensures that parents and families have access to support services. They are encouraged by some of the responses, but noted that changes are already being considered and implemented to get the consistent, clear message across that the administration is listening. He thanked board members who were able to attend the Focus Group meetings, and reiterated that everyone involved wants the best for the children.
5. The Capital Outlay Plan will be discussed at the next meeting as some items are urgent including four special education classrooms at Ruston High School.

6. Cypress Springs has an Interim Principal, Mary Kilgore, who was previously the Coordinating Teacher. Mandy Brown, who was previously the Coordinating Teacher at Ruston Elementary, has been named the Interim Principal. In February or March a formal application process will be opened for the Principal positions, but in the meantime Mr. Milstead believes the two ladies are great additions to the principal core in Lincoln Parish.

Hearing no comments from Board members, upon a motion by Ms. Best, the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Mike Milstead, Secretary

Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President