

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, October 4, 2016 10:30 a.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, October 4, 2016, at 10:30 a.m. at Hillcrest Elementary School, 301 East Kentucky Avenue, Louisiana. Members present were Ms. Debbie Abraham (arrived after the meeting began), Mr. Otha Anders (left early), Mr. Michael Barmore, Ms. Lisa Best, Mr. Danny Hancock, Ms. Lynda Henderson, Mr. Trott Hunt, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, and Ms. Susan Wiley.

Mr. Curtis Dowling and Mr. David Ferguson were absent.

President Joe Mitcham called the meeting to order, and Mr. Mack gave the invocation. Mr. Barmore led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Ms. Abraham entered the meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the agenda as printed.

Upon a motion by Ms. Best, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on September 6, 2016.

Cathi Cox-Boniol, Lincoln ACHIEVE Coordinator, was delighted to inform the Board that another Ruston High school student had been selected as a National Merit Finalist. She summarized the steps the student had taken prior to making it to the top .5% of seniors in the nation. Ms. Cox-Boniol introduced Hannah Scheaffer, presented a plaque to her in recognition of being selected as a National Merit Finalist. She congratulated the senior, wished her well as

she continued in the competition, and had her make comments to the Board and introduce her guests.

Miss Scheaffer thanked the board for the honor and indicated that she appreciates the school board, her principal, Ricky Durrett, and her parents for the encouragement and help she had received to do her best every day.

Mr. Mitcham applauded her and her achievements.

Principal of Hillcrest Elementary School, Patrice Hilton, welcomed guests to the school, which she was glad to provide a quick tour of prior to the meeting for those who arrived early as they had experienced recent renovations and some new construction. She said she was very proud to be the leader of the wonderful group of individuals who work at the school, do their very best, love their jobs, and are committed to the K-2nd grade students. In closing, she urged board members who couldn't get there early to stay after the meeting and let her take them to the new part of the school.

Prior to the regular session, a Building and Grounds Committee meeting was held at Hillcrest at 10:15 a.m. Chairman Trott Hunt reported that the Capital Outlay Plan for 2017-2022 was reviewed. He thanked Superintendent Mike Milstead for working with the principals, architect, and other staff members and putting the plan together. Mr. Hunt reminded board members that the Capital Outlay Plan was simply a plan and subject to revision especially in the latter years of the plan. He shared the Committee's unanimous recommendation to approve the Capital Outlay Plan.

After President Joe Mitcham expressed his appreciation to the Superintendent for the work that went into the plan's formulation, the Board unanimously voted to approve the

Capital Outlay Plan as a guide for future spending for district construction and/or maintenance issues.

The self-insured health plan is worked on year round, according to George Murphy, Business Manager, and advice and analysis continue to be received from David Charpentier, Vice president of Brown & Brown Insurance. It seems that once a year recommendations to tweak the plan are being brought for the Board's consideration in an attempt to keep the plan solvent. Meetings were held with an insurance committee and the administration to review current data and hear issues that needed to be addressed and Mr. Charpentier's recommendations. They formulated a plan, received approval from the Superintendent, and he noted that he believes the proposed changes will benefit the plan. Adding a \$25 per adult and \$50 per family monthly penalty in January 1, 2019, for current employees and their spouses (not retirees) who do not take advantage of the annual wellness-coded visit with a health care professional will benefit the members and the plan. Another proposal was to raise deductibles. Mr. Murphy asked David Charpentier to expound.

Mr. Charpentier noted in the analysis that there was well below average utilization of the wellness benefits for the employees; therefore, chronic illnesses were either not detected early or were not taken care of and allowed to progress to acute illnesses. He believes millions of dollars in claims could be prevented if people would take better care of themselves. They had wanted to introduce something like the penalty for nonuse of the wellness program a couple of years ago, but the Equal Opportunity Commission became interested in wellness plans involving the Affordable Care Act. All of the court cases had been completed, so the school system can now make changes without their interference. It is a very basic program,

in his opinion, that can be built on as time elapses. He elaborated on Mr. Murphy's comments that if the proposed changes are approved, if members have one wellness exam with a physician during the course of a year, they will continue to pay the premiums they are currently paying. To give members adequate time to comply, if they do not see a doctor from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018, the \$25 minimum and \$25 maximum penalty will be assessed each month beginning in January 1 2019. Other changes being proposed to become effective January 1, 2017, were:

1. Increase the combined maximum number of physical, occupational, and speech therapy visits from 30 to 50;
2. Increase the non-preferred prescription brand co-pay from \$60 to \$100; and
3. Increase the medical deductible from \$500 to \$750.

Mr. Charpentier noted that a \$750 deductible was well below the benchmarked equivalent plans of which almost 74% had deductibles that were over \$2,500. It was his opinion that these recommended changes would help off-set the rising costs of the health plan without increasing employee premiums.

After one question, upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Ms. Henderson, the Board unanimously voted to approve the recommendations to the health care plan that were summarized above.

As the parish's policy for promotion and retention of students, the *Pupil Progression Plan* (PPP), is based on Bulletin 1566, Bulletin 741, and Act 750 (R.S. 17:24.4) of the Louisiana State Legislature. Ashley Ellis, Accountability Coordinator, asked that revisions to the 2016-2017 PPP be approved in order to be in full compliance with all state regulations.

She indicated that an entire copy of the PPP was available for review.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Ms. Abraham, the Board unanimously voted to approve the revised 2016-2017 Lincoln Parish *Pupil Progression Plan*.

Four more policies were being recommended for revision. Mary Null shared the changes to *Interscholastic Athletics* – IDFA, *Student Organizations* – JHC, *Foreign Exchange Students* – JQK, and *Student Records* – JR. She asked members to peruse the suggested revisions with a vote to be taken at the next meeting.

Permission to formally approve change order #2 for the boys' soccer building and New Tech projects at Ruston High School was the next agenda item. James Payton, New Construction Coordinator, said the addition of 15 days and the following six items were included:

1. CMU block wall at boys' soccer building	\$2,255.00
2. Ticket booth reword at girls' soccer building	(\$ 450.00)
3. Exploratory electrical at soccer	\$1,200.00
4. Volleyball sleeves	(\$2,500.00)
5. Underground electrical work at New Tech building	\$4,251.50
6. Use contingency allowance	<u>(\$4,756.50)</u>
Total change order amount	\$ 0.00

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Wiley, the Board unanimously voted to approve change order #2 for the boys' soccer and New Tech projects at Ruston High adding 15 days to the contract time but no change to the contract price.

The Lincoln Parish School Board had acquired property over the years for the Grambling lab schools. Those no longer exist; however, the Lincoln Preparatory Academy assumed control

of the property communicated George Murphy. Upon advice from the La Department of Education, Division of Finance, he prepared a letter of transfer of the property. He presented the same for the Board's approval along with 14 double-spaced pages of property.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to approve the letter of transfer of property from the Lincoln Parish School Board to the Lincoln Preparatory Academy.

Change order #1 for the Choudrant sports complex parking lot contained the following:

1. Extend asphalt paving on the west side of the parking lot, which is an area approximately 200' long with variable width and a 21' extension of concrete curb; and
2. Remove existing 15" drainage pipe and install 80' of new 24" drainage pipe and reconstruct catch basin.

James Payton said the above-mentioned work would add \$19,395.00 to the contract price and 5 days to the contract time, making the substantial completion date November 30, 2016. He asked for approval of the change order.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve change order #1 for the Choudrant sports complex with Items #1 and #2 from above adding \$19,395.090 to the contract price and 5 days to the contract timer.

The Town of Dubach requested a construction and permanent servitude to extend a proposed 6" water transmission line located on Lincoln Parish School Board property. George Murphy called attention to a servitude that Jeff Robinson, Assistant District Attorney, had prepared. He recommended approval of the servitude.

Mr. Robinson was present to help answer questions.

Hearing none, upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Mack, the Board

unanimously voted to approve the servitude with the Town of Dubach.

Three policies were being recommended for revision. Assistant Superintendent, Mary Null, asked board members to study the proposed changes to *Equal Employment Opportunity*–GAAA, *Equal Education Opportunities*–JAA, and *Bullying and Hazing*–JCDAF until the next meeting when a vote would be taken.

The current Lincoln Parish Performance Salary Schedule contains two possible yearly base salary increases for certificated employees – a final evaluation label of *Highly Effective* nets a \$300 base salary increase the following year, and a final evaluation label of *Effective Proficient* nets a \$150 base salary increase the following year. Ms. Null shared the administration’s recommendation to revise the salary schedule to allow a net \$300 base salary increase for certificated staff that earn either a final evaluation rating of *Highly Effective* or *Effective Proficient*. An employee who earned either of those was above average and deserved a higher base salary increase, and the change would enable evaluators to score their staff more objectively while consistently making suggestions for improvement in order to increase student achievement levels. If approved, the revision would not affect the budget significantly as the vast majority of certificated staff have earned a Highly Effective rating since the state required districts to implement a salary scheduled based on performance. In closing, she reported that no base salary increase was given to certificated employees earning a label of *Effective Emerging* or *Ineffective*; those employees were provided intensive assistance to help improve their performance.

Following a couple of questions, upon a motion by Ms. Best, seconded by Ms. Abraham, the Board unanimously voted to approve the revised model of the Lincoln Parish Performance

Salary Schedule to become effective for base salary increases from the 15-16 evaluation results.

Renovation and construction at Ruston Junior High was nearing completion, and Mr. Payton requested approval of change order #1 on the project. If approved, it would reduce the contract price by \$53,241.96 and add 89 days to the contract time. The change order included the following additions and credits:

1. Delete undercut	(\$13,200.00)
2. Delete replacement fill	(\$31,500.00)
3. Delete two weeks job overhead (dirt work)	(\$ 6,000.00)
4. Change feeder wiring to aluminum and reduce panel sizes	(\$ 6,500.00)
5. Delete gas fired unit heaters	(\$ 2,000.00)
6. Run gas underground	(\$ 5,176.00)
7. Ceiling work deduct for gas change	(\$ 2,400.00)
8. Deduct mud bed on CT wall tie skim coat to smooth block joints	(\$20,800.00)
9. Change sawdust exhaust system	(\$26,000.00)
10. New fire hydrant in new location (old one could not be reused)	\$ 7,061.86
11. Rework domestic water to bus barn	\$ 2,392.66
12. Exhaust fan relocation at existing building	\$ 669.90
13. Add dust collection accessories	\$ 5,835.95
14. Add 2 washers and 2 dryers	\$37,994.50
15. Add 1 table saw and accessories	\$ 8,023.17
16. Overhead door finish change	(\$ 1,644.00)

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Mr. Hunt, the Board unanimously voted to approve change order #1 on the Ruston Junior High renovation and construction project with a reduction of \$53,241.96 to the contract price and an addition of 89 days to the contract time.

Even though sales tax collections have decreased during the fiscal year, a surplus has been amassed for the purpose of maintaining the amounts of salary supplement checks paid in previous years. George Murphy proposed that the supplements for November 2016 be \$2,500 for certificated personal and \$1,250 for support personnel, which were the same amounts as last year. He cautioned that in future years a reduction might become necessary if there was a

sustained period of decline in sales tax collections.

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Abraham, the Board unanimously voted to approve the payment of salary supplements on November 18, 2016, in the amounts of \$2,500 to certified personnel and \$1,250 to support personnel.

Mr. Anders left meeting.

Lisa Mangum, Reading Recovery Coach, shared how 7 reading interventionists were working around the parish with struggling readers. Using Star Reading, 100 first grade students were screened earlier in the year, and several weeks were spent reviewing with those who were STAR students last year. The interventionists are serving 31 individual students and 28 in small groups. This year they are also spending 1 - 2 hours a day in first grade classrooms. Professional development, behind the glass observations, and walk through observations are all being done periodically.

The following personnel items were communicated by Director of Human Resources, Dr.

Doris Lewis:

1. Retirement of Wanda Mitchell, technology coordinator at the Central Office, effective January 17, 2017.

2. Resignation of:

Kari McGuire, social studies teacher at Choudrant High, effective September 14, 2016;
and

Whitney Wheelis, social studies teacher at Ruston High, effective September 26, 2016.

3. Employment of:

Victoria Johnson as social studies teacher at Choudrant High effective September 12, 2016, replacing Kari McGuire who resigned;

Jarrold Pittman as physical science teacher at Ruston High effective August 29, 2016, replacing Missy Wooley who resigned; and

Renee Overby as special education at Simsboro School effective August 8, 2016, replacing Stephanie Whitten who resigned.

4. Resignation of Belinda Otwell, school food service manager at Ruston Elementary, effective September 26, 2016.
5. Point of Reference/Transfer of Antionette Collins from Ruston High to school food service manager at Ruston Elementary effective September 26, 2016, replacing Belinda Otwell who resigned.
6. Employment of Quintin Crowe as custodian at Simsboro High effective September 19, 2016, replacing Janet McMurray who was deceased.
7. Resignation of the following bus drivers:

Brandon Umeri, mechanic helper/bus driver in the Ruston area, effective August 1, 2016; and

Steve Theodos, bus driver in the Dubach area, effective September 30, 2016.

8. Employment of Kimberly Gragg, bus driver in the Dubach area effective October 3, 2016, replacing Steve Theodos who resigned.

George Murphy reported that sales tax collections for the month of September 2016 were \$1,383,959; that was down 16.91% compared to the same month last year. Year-to-date the fund was down 28%, which translates to \$1.8 million so far for the first three months of the fiscal year. Audits were down 59% year-to-date.

Mr. Murphy said correspondence was received from the state regarding the MFP for 17-18. It appears that the allotment from the state will go down another \$2.7 million, which was a little less than the expected \$4 million. He reiterated that he believes the school system will be okay due to reserves.

During his Financial Update for August of 2016, he communicated that sales taxes are not

what he expected, however the Total Fund Balance was a little over \$41 million.

Thanks to David Charpentier and his expertise, even though the Health Care Fund was down \$175,000 for the month of August 2016, it was up \$1.1 million year-to-date. In answer to a question, George Murphy noted the Unassigned Fund Balance was a little over \$10 million, which was getting closer to the goal of \$15 million.

Mr. Payton gave a construction update on the renovation and construction projects in the district and noted the following:

1. The slab was poured for the New Tech addition at Ruston High School. The frame/red iron was scheduled to arrive on October 13 and will begin to be erected. That project was moving along nicely.
2. On the RHS soccer project, the inside of the building for boys' soccer has been completely demoed, and the plumbers are almost finished. The interior blocking was next. For the girls' building, the exterior blocking was complete, and they were about two days from being finished with the interior blocking. They were about to put trusses on the pitched roof.

Superintendent Milstead communicated that even though the boys' soccer building looks larger than the girls' soccer building, it was the original building and has a storage area for all of soccer included. Square footage for actual use of the buildings was approximately the same.

3. Blocking was complete on the Ruston High freshman locker building. Bar joists and metal decking for the mansard roof were being installed.
4. They were still waiting on bricks for the RHS spirit building. The plumbers and electricians were working on the inside, and duct work was also being done. That project was also moving along well.
5. The very large project at Ruston Junior High was in its final phases. Work on the south end was about a month ahead of the north end. On the south end, they were cleaning, putting on cabinet tops, working on the floors, and installing appliances for the consumer science department. The fire marshal was there yesterday and said it's a good possibility that the south end will be ready for use by the middle of October. On the north end, they were painting the gym ceiling and will soon be installing the gym floor.

6. Drainage issues at the athletic complex at Choudrant High were being addressed and asphalt was being extended as had been noted in the discussion regarding change order #1 on the project.
7. The girls' gym floor at Ruston High were complete, and they were having class in the gym. Not only does the floor look very nice, a credit change order will be coming soon for approximately \$20,000 on that project because the 2 x 4s under the support floor were in good shape and did not have to be replaced. Mr. Payton also said that the windows were tinted.

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

1. As he had mentioned before things are alive and well with the New Tech program at Ruston High School. The program, which was begun several years ago, has been successful in keeping students in school with a 90% graduation rate over a 4 year period. However, because of state requirements the administration feels like New Tech needs to do a better job of morphing into matching state requirements. Principal Ricky Durrett and he felt that it seemed to better address the needs of 9th and 10th graders, but students were leaving after that to take AP classes and other classes where performance was very high. It was felt a better job needed to be done to meet the requirements and expectations of the 11th and 12th graders. Per the principal's recommendation, a couple of academies are being organized that will fall under New Tech. An engineering academy has already begun and students are scheduled and in classes. A health academy is coming and students have scheduled classes. It was felt that these would better meet the needs of the OLDER students and that they should fall under New Tech. A trip was planned for New Tech board members and Lincoln Parish School Board members were invited to visit the BPSTIL, Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning, on October 25 to see what the administration envisions the RHS New Tech becoming.
2. That the school system was very fortunate to be able to cooperate with Louisiana Tech to have a program that was labeled Believe and Prepare. It is a way to train teachers from Tech to initially volunteer to be in a year-long residency for their student teacher. Before the program, student teachers were in classes for a quarter. Out of those 10-12 weeks, they may have taught for 5 or 6 weeks. Tech and others in the state felt like that was not long enough, and so the Believe and Prepare program extends the time student teachers spend in the classrooms from 10-12 weeks to an entire school year. As a result, the number of student teachers or mentees who are participating has increased from 7 in the first year to 29. He believes the experience the mentees receive from bus duty to analyzing test scores, taking the data, and transforming that into lesson plans that meet the needs of individual students is invaluable. The process, which is in its third year, was being considered to be

mandated by BESE, and the Board of Regents. He opined that would be very profitable for Lincoln Parish. Currently there are 29 classrooms in Lincoln Parish that have 2 teachers, the board-hired teacher and the student teacher/mentee. Some of those are high needs and high maintenance students. As usual funding for the mentees' \$2,000 stipend (since they can't have another job) and the mentors' \$1,000 payment is uncertain, but he believes the program is worthwhile even if the funding ends up being the school system's responsibility after 3 years. Mr. Milstead believes a cost to Lincoln Parish of \$90,000 (30 mentees with 30 mentors at a total of \$3,000 each) would be the best monetary investment he has seen in his 40+ years in education because it is a tremendous investment in students and in early intervention. Although the Believe and Prepare initiative was originally designed just for elementary classrooms, several high school teachers are paired with mentees this year. Lincoln Parish has modeled it for the state. John White, State Superintendent, has formulated a plan to fund the program for the next 3 years. Finally, he was recently notified that state will receive a TIF grant from the federal government for several million dollars that will help fund Believe and Prepare. He is very excited about the potential as every year approximately 30-50 classrooms in Lincoln Parish will have 2 teachers because of the program. As he just shared with superintendents in a collective meeting and the Board of Regents personnel, he explained the importance of the initiative for future teacher. In fact, in Lincoln Parish those who graduate from the one-year program, will be given a year of experience for salary purposes. They will also be rated by a national norm device, and their score can be used to ascertain that Lincoln Parish is hiring the very best teachers. Several administrators will be traveling to Baton Rouge to address BESE as they vote on Believe and Prepare next week.

After a comment from one board member and upon a motion by Ms. Best, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Mike Milstead, Secretary

Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President