

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD  
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, September 5, 2017 6:00 p.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, September 5, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Lincoln Parish School Board Office, 410 South Farmerville Street, Ruston, Louisiana. Members present were Ms. Debbie Abrahm, Mr. Otha Anders, Mr. Mike Barmore, Ms. Lisa Best, Mr. David Ferguson, Mr. Danny Hancock, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, and Ms. Susan Wiley.

Mr. Curtis Dowling, Ms. Lynda Henderson, and Mr. Trott Hunt were absent.

President Mitcham called the meeting to order, and Mr. Barmore gave the invocation. Mr. George Mack, Jr., led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag. Mr. Mitcham welcomed those in attendance.

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

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Abrahm, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on August 1, 2017, as submitted.

Julie Stephenson, University Liaison - Teacher Pipeline Lead, was happy to introduce 21 amazing educators who opened up their classrooms to voluntary yearlong Resident Teachers in 17-18. The Mentor Teachers, from Louisiana Tech University, work tirelessly to prepare tomorrow's teachers and literally to teach Resident Teachers how to teach. Serving in 5 of the area schools, they serve countless students. She noted that they receive a \$2,000 stipend for their services, funded by BESE and the US Department of Education's Teacher Incentive Fund

(TIF) grant. Ms. Stephenson, Superintendent Mike Milstead, and Joe Mitcham thanked the Mentor Teachers for their commitment to the students and the school system.

A lone company's bids for the purchase of fuel for the 17-18 school year were opened on August 11, 2017. Ricky Edmiston, Supervisor of Auxiliary Services, recommended that the Board accept Hill Oil Company's bids as follows:

Fuel	Total Price
Unleaded regular	.1085
Unleaded plus	.1085
Unleaded premium	.1085
Low sulfur road use diesel	.1125
Regular No. 2 grade diesel	.1325

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board unanimously voted to accept the lowest bids meeting specifications from Hill Oil Company for fuel for the 17-18 school year as shown above.

Because the health plan was operating at a deficit during 2017, George Murphy, Business Manager, had been working with David Charpentier, Vice President with Brown & Brown Insurance, to determine changes that need to be made. Those changes were considered by the administration and shared with the system's Insurance Committee. It was decided that the proposed changes were necessary to keep costs level next year and should be brought for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Charpentier gave some background on the type of situations the health care plan was facing. Although the plan was performing well, so far this year, compared to its peers, other school boards, and larger employers, costs for prescription drugs were still a problem. Those costs had gone from about 27% of costs five years ago to 40% currently. He believes the

majority of that was a consequence of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Drug co-pays are no longer paid every time a member goes to the pharmacy. Under the ACA, all costs, including drug co-pays go toward the maximum out-of-pocket. So a percentage of those covered who are chronically ill pay nothing for their drugs for the rest of the year after they reach their maximum out-of-pocket. That requires the plan to pay more and the members to pay less. Secondly, prior to the ACA, there were annual and lifetime limits on what the plan would pay – maybe \$1 million to \$4 million; today that's unlimited. The utilization of the emergency room was also very high. Mr. Charpentier shared the following recommendations to the plan effective January 1, 2018, and estimated that at least \$1 million could be saved if they were implemented:

1. Increase emergency room co-pay from \$200 to \$250.
2. Increase pharmacy deductible from \$250 to \$350.
3. Increase pharmacy copays from:
  - A. \$10 generic to \$20.
  - B. \$30 preferred name brand to \$60.
  - C. \$100 non-preferred name brand – no change.
4. Adopt a closed formulary for drugs.
5. Exclude drugs that are essentially over the counter drugs which are combined into a prescription drug.
6. Exclude drugs that have over-the-counter alternatives.
7. Increase the all-inclusive maximum out-of-pocket from \$3,500 to \$4,500.

A brief period of questions and answers followed.

Sensing that Board members were hesitant to proceed with all 7 recommendations, Mr. Charpentier said that only #4 was of an extremely timely nature – the others could be considered for another month or the Board could cover the increase in cost rather than adjust benefits. Raising premium rates was also mentioned. In order to implement change #4 for January of 2018, Blue Cross would need a decision by September 22, 2017. That proposed

change means that only Formulary Drugs would be covered; Non-Formulary Drugs would be denied. There are approved drugs in every drug category, but some members would have to change from one medication to another. That would affect about 102 people, Mr. Charpentier opined. If the Board voted to make changes, Blue Cross would send letters to members alerting them of the changes.

Mr. Murphy noted that since the consensus of opinion was to take another month to study all of the recommendations except #4, the administration would withdraw the other six.

Superintendent Milstead urged the Board to consider that during the past year, out of an approximate \$71.5 million budget, almost \$10 million was paid for insurance. If that percentage continued, ultimately money would be taken from students to pay insurance costs, and he doesn't believe the Board wants that.

President Mitcham asked the Board how they felt about adopting the closed formulary.

Upon a motion by Ms. Abrahm, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to adopt a closed formulary for drugs effective January 1, 2018.

Change order #1 on the Ruston Junior High and Dubach School toilet modifications and Ruston High new auditorium ceiling project was presented by Mike Milstead in the absence of James Payton, New Construction Coordinator. The cost to relocate a new electrical panel feeder at Dubach was \$13,386.84. Taking \$12,000.00 from the contingency credit allowance would leave a total cost of \$1,386.84 if approved. No additional days were needed.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board unanimously voted to approve change order #1 for Ruston Junior High and Dubach School toilet modifications and Ruston High new auditorium ceiling project in the amount of \$1,386.86.

In addition, Mr. Milstead, suggested that Substantial Completion documents for the Ruston Junior High and Dubach School toilet modifications and Ruston High new auditorium ceiling project be executed after thorough review by the architect and James Payton.

Mike Walpole, Architect, said the project was closed out and he was satisfied.

Upon a motion by Ms. Best, seconded by Ms. Wiley, the Board unanimously voted to grant permission and authorize the superintendent, his staff, and the architect to execute the Substantial Completion documents for the Ruston Junior High and Dubach School toilet modifications and Ruston High new auditorium ceiling project.

School Food Service has been collecting and storing broken and obsolete equipment. Betty Fowler, Supervisor of Child Nutrition, called attention to a list of the items and noted that sheet pans and baking pans from Ruston High School need to be added. She asked that the items be declared surplus so she could dispose of them.

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Abrahm, the Board unanimously voted to declare the items presented as surplus and grant authority to the administration to dispose of all items in a prudent manner.

The administration analyzed the fund balance of the 2000 Sales Tax Fund over the last several years, which funds the November salary supplement checks. George Murphy said they were recommending a \$500 increase for certificated personnel and \$250 increase for non-certificated personnel because they anticipated that those amounts could be sustained. He did caution that in future years, a reduction might become necessary if there was a sustained period of decline in sales tax collections. If approved, salary supplements would increase from \$2,500 to \$3,000 for certificated personnel and \$1,250 to \$1,500 for non-certificated personnel. The

increase would cost approximately \$461,475.12, and it would be taken from the \$3,276,533 reserve balance in the Sales Tax Fund.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to approve the payment of salary supplements on November 17, 2017, in the amount of \$3,000 to certificated personnel and \$1,500 to support personnel.

A credit change order for \$205.00 for the security project at Choudrant Elementary, Choudrant High, Dubach School, and Simsboro School was presented by Mr. Milstead. Four items, all at Choudrant High, were included on the change order. They were:

1. Remove and replace 72' of curb and gutter – add \$2,884.00;
2. Add black coloring to the concrete paving at front entry of the school – add \$411.00;
3. Remove and replace approximately 150 linear feet of sidewalk on the east side of the school – add \$6,500.00; and
4. Credit for contingency and hardware allowances – credit \$10,000.00.

He said no days were requested for the additional work.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to approve credit change order #1 for security improvements at Choudrant Elementary, Choudrant High, Dubach School, and Simsboro School in the amount of (\$205.00) that included items 1. – 4. from above.

Since all of the security improvements mentioned above were complete and functional, Mike Milstead requested formal permission to execute substantial completion of the project.

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Mr. Mack, the Board unanimously voted to grant permission and authorize the Superintendent, his staff, and the architect to execute the substantial completion documents for security improvements at Choudrant Elementary, Choudrant High, Dubach School, and Simsboro School.

The State Department of Insurance had issued guidelines related to Uninsured Motorist coverage. George Murphy communicated that each school system was required to include in board minutes a consent item authorizing the Superintendent to sign the Uninsured Motorist form; therefore, he asked the Board to adopt a Resolution authorizing the same.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Ms. Abraham, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the Resolution authorizing the Superintendent to sign the Uninsured Motorist form.

The Building and Grounds Committee met at 5:30 p.m. prior to the start of the Regular Session. In the absence of Chairperson Trott Hunt, President Joe Mitcham said the Committee considered and voted to recommend all four items for approval by the full Board.

1. The Capital Outlay Plan for 2017 – 2023 was presented by the Superintendent. If approved, it would be a guide for estimating future spending related to construction updates and/or new construction. Although the Plan was fluid and would likely be changed, amounts anticipated to be spent on projects throughout the parish were:

2017-2018	\$1,435,949
2018-2019	\$3,875,000
2019-2020	\$2,894,000
2020-2021	\$3,457,000
2021-2022	\$2,587,000

Joe Mitcham asked the full Board how they felt about the Committee's recommendation to approve the Plan.

The Board unanimously voted by to approve the Capital Outlay Plan as a guide for future major spending for the district construction and/or maintenance issues.

2. Due to having numerous bid dates for projects on the Capital Outlay Plan for 2017-2018, Mr. Milstead requested authorization be given to allow the architect, Mike Walpole, to advertise for bids as he completes respective plans and prepares for each bid date. He reminded members that each of the projects on the list were previously presented and approved by board members. Authorization would likely prevent delays which might occur as a result of Mr. Walpole completing plans mid-month and having to wait to get permission to bid at the next meeting of the Lincoln Parish School Board.

The Board unanimously voted to grant authorization for the architect, Mike Walpole, to advertise for bids for projects on the Capital Outlay Plan for 2017-2018 as he determines he is ready to do so.

3. The architect will encounter the problem of initiating and completing the special education classroom project at Ruston High School over the course of the winter and spring for it to be completed by the beginning of school in August 2018. Mr. Milstead said as much as two additional work weeks would likely be gained if the Board gave him permission to evaluate and award the bid. If they did so, he would then notify them at the next scheduled meeting. He noted that the bid could not exceed the projected amount by 15% for him to be able to commit.

The Board unanimously voted to grant permission for Superintendent Mike Milstead to accept a bid on behalf of the Board for the Special Education classrooms to be built at Ruston High and notify the School Board at the next scheduled meeting. The accepted bid amount could not exceed the projected amount more than 15% for the Superintendent to exercise this option.

4. Approximately 9 to 10 acres of land that the former Hico Elementary School, parking lot, and playground were located on has been vacant and was even cleared several years ago because of liability issues. Mr. Milstead recommended the sale of the property as it was of no further use to the Board, but proposed that the oil, gas, and mineral rights be retained. He called attention to a copy of the plats and said an appraisal had recently been completed; the acreage was deemed to be worth \$36,000.00. Mike Milstead suggested that an attempt be made to sell all of the parcels together, and if that wasn't successful, to break them up and sell them.

The Board unanimously voted to approve, pending the appraisal, to advertise for bids to sell 9 to 10 acres of property in Hico without the oil, gas, and mineral rights with a minimum bid of the appraised price plus the cost of the appraisal.

President Mitcham said the Finance Committee met prior to the start of the Regular Session at 5:45 p.m. He declared a time of public hearing for the proposed budget for year ending June 30, 2018.

Chairperson, Lisa Best, said the Business Manager had presented the proposed budget to the Finance Committee. She turned the floor over to him to summarize what was discussed.

Mr. George Murphy called attention to Exhibit "A" and said it was a pretty aggressive budget. The first reason for that was the planned expenditures, \$3.875 million, for the Capital Outlay Plan, and the second was a decrease in the Minimum Foundation Program for the upcoming year. On July 1, 2017 the school system had \$37.5 million in fund balance; at the end of the year, the fund balance was estimated to be \$31.8 million.



Even though that was a decrease, it was felt that adequate funds remained, and the system would be okay with Standards and Poor's.

He asked for questions or comments. Mr. Murphy answered several questions and heard comments from the Board and the public.

Ms. Best shared the Committee's recommendation to adopt the proposed beginning budget for the year ending June 30, 2018.

The Board unanimously voted by roll call to adopt the 2017-2018 proposed budget as presented and grant permission for the administration to amend the budget as needed throughout the year and bring a final revised budget to the board for approval at year end.

The Business Department was thanked for the careful work that went into the preparation of the beginning budget.

The time for public hearing was closed.

Assistant Superintendent, Lisa Bastion, was excited to report that all students were in classes and all teachers had rosters. Things were going well with the start of school for 17-18, and numbers were up a little over 30 compared to the same time last year with 6,262 students as of August 31.

She was also proud to share some of the students' state results on their ACT scores. She reiterated that the system gets a score from the state that becomes part of accountability in school and district performance scores. A national score is also received from ACT. She called attention to Power Point slides that showed for 16-17 Lincoln Parish's average composite score was a 20.9; Choudrant High had a 20.7, Ruston High had a 21.2, and Simsboro had an 18.9, which were increases at all three high schools from last year. Ms. Bastion also reminded the Board that these scores were achieved with all students taking the ACT. That began in 12-13. In the 5<sup>th</sup> year of testing every junior, she communicated that the students could retest as seniors if they so desired. The great news was that the composite score ranked Lincoln Parish 5<sup>th</sup> in the

State, below St. Tammany, Zachary, Central, and West Feliciana. The administration was very excited about that position, and she noted to get there the teachers, administration, and students were working very hard.

A personnel report was the next item on the agenda. Dr. Doris Lewis, Human Resources Director, voiced the following:

1. Resignation of the following:

Rhonda Thomas, special education paraprofessional at Ruston High, effective August 1, 2017;

Amy Guerin, science/STEM at Ruston Junior High, effective July 31, 2017; and

Yulonda Conley, math teacher at Simsboro High, effective August 3, 2017.

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

Jennifer Calloway, teacher at Choudrant Elementary effective August 21, 2017, in a new position because of increased numbers;

Monica Ferrell, secretary at Cypress Springs effective July 27, 2017, replacing Sandra Woods who transferred;

Bonnie Williams, teacher at Cypress Springs, replacing Haley Caraway who resigned;

Mary Dance, early childhood teacher at LPECC, replacing Jordan Cheatham who resigned;

Anita Pickett, teacher at Ruston Elementary, replacing Polly Durrett who transferred;

Lisa Hightower, librarian at Ruston Elementary, replacing Sheila Wheelis who resigned;

Zachary White, math teacher at Ruston High, replacing Jarrod Pittman who resigned;

Angie Borden, credit recovery at Ruston High, replacing Catherine Letendre who transferred;

Michael Peterson, PE/Coach at Ruston High, replacing Pat Hall who resigned;

Erin Nevala, science teacher at Ruston Junior High, replacing Amy Guerin who resigned;

Vivian Hinton, special education at Ruston Junior High, replacing Jeremy Blake who resigned;

Lana Hendrix, social studies teacher at Ruston Junior High, replacing Sean Welsh who resigned; and

Ragan Dendy, ELA teacher at Simsboro High effective August 8, 2017, replacing Yulonda Conley who resigned.

3. Resignation of Adrian Hill, bus driver in Ruston/special education, effective August 10, 2017.
4. Employment of the following effective August 10, 2017:

Sarah Williams, bus driver in Dubach/Ruston, replacing Rodney Ebeyer who retired; and

Matilda Rison, bus driver in Ruston/special education, replacing Adrian Hill who resigned.

5. Points of Reference/Transfers of the following School Food Service employees effective August 1, 2017:

Dana Wright, from Ruston High to clerk/technician at Cypress Springs, replacing Tameka Patton who transferred;

Lisa Carter, from Ruston High to technician at Cypress Springs, replacing Wilma Pruitt who retired;

Cassandra Franklin, from Simsboro High to manager/clerk at Dubach Elementary, replacing Regina Berry who transferred;

Tameka Patton, from Cypress Springs to technician at Glen View, replacing Barbara Wilson who transferred;

Regina Berry, from Dubach Elementary to manager/clerk at Hillcrest, replacing Jan Smith who was manager and transferred and Dana Rushing who was clerk and transferred;

Jan Smith, from Hillcrest Elementary to manager at Ruston High, replacing Lisa Carter who transferred;

Dana Rushing, from Hillcrest Elementary to clerk/technician at Ruston High, replacing Dana Wright who transferred; and

Barbara Wilson, from Glen View Elementary to technician at Ruston High, replacing Etta Outley who transferred.

6. Retirement of Howard Mitchell, custodian at Cypress Springs, effective August 4, 2017.
7. Employment of Tracey Nelson, custodian at Cypress Springs effective August 23, 2017, replacing Howard Mitchell who retired.

Sales tax collections for August 2017 were down a little over 3% compared to the same month last year with a total of \$1,402,389 being collected, according to George Murphy. Year-to-date sales tax figures were up 2.57%. Recoveries through audits during the month were \$114.76, and those were down compared to last year.

Although June and July 2017 financial statements were included in packets, Mr. Murphy said he'd summarize the July report. The Total Fund Balance was down \$462,000 compared to July of 2016, but was up \$1.6 million compared to June of 2017.

In July 2017, the Health Care Fund was down \$673,000, and it was down \$978,000 year-to-date. After answering one question, he asked board members to contact him to let him know their concerns before proposed changes were brought back to them at the October meeting. He repeated that change was difficult, but the self-insured plan must be looked at annually in order to keep it viable. Other possible changes were mentioned to keep the great benefit.

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

1. Placed in portfolios was a 10 page summary report on a 52 page report that had been received following 8 different Focus Group meetings. He took the top 5 concerns of the parents, teachers and other educators, and

community leaders and included them and the recommendations presented by the same. Mr. Milstead also attached a list of things being done or planned in the district in response. Communication was the key, he believes, and he intends to meet every-other-month with advisory groups of parents and teachers.

2. As a reminder, the October 3 Regular Session of the Lincoln Parish School Board was scheduled at 10:30 a.m. in the teachers' lounge at Ruston High School. A Meet and Greet was being planned with the Resident Teachers prior to the meeting.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Ms. Best, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

---

Mike Milstead, Secretary

---

Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President