

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD  
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, May 2, 2017 6:00 p.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Lincoln Parish School Board Central Office, 410 South Farmerville Street, Ruston, Louisiana. Members present were Ms. Debbie Abrahm, Mr. Otha Anders, Mr. Michael Barmore, Ms. Lisa Best, Mr. Curtis Dowling, Mr. David Ferguson, Mr. Danny Hancock, Ms. Lynda Henderson, Mr. Trott Hunt, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, and Ms. Susan Wiley.

No board member was absent.

President Joe Mitcham called the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. The invocation was given by Ms. Wiley. Mary Null, Assistant Superintendent, led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

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. Hancock, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on April 4, 2017, as distributed.

Following a month of study, Lisa Bastion, Chief Academic Officer, asked for Board approval of a proposed policy revision.

Upon a motion by Ms. Best, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve revisions to the JBCE – *Public School Choice* policy.

Four bids were received for the restoration of toilets at Ruston Junior High and Dubach School and replacement of the auditorium ceiling at Ruston High School. New Project Coordinator, James Payton, noted those submitting bids were: Ragan Builders of West Monroe, Ouachita Builders of West Monroe, Triad Builders of Ruston, and Vista Construction of Monroe. Base bids for the RHS auditorium ceiling replacement and toilet restoration on the north end of RJHS ranged from \$385,000 to \$509,482. Bids for additive alternate #1, all work on Dubach's toilet modifications, were \$149,000 to \$224,000. Bids for additive alternate #2, work on a janitor's closet and the existing men's and women's toilets on the south end of RJHS, ranged from \$232,000 to \$284,000. All of the bidders anticipated 74 days to complete the project. After reviewing the bids, Mr. Payton communicated that the administration recommended acceptance of the lowest base bid and additive alternate #1 both submitted by Ouachita Builders of West Monroe. He noted that additive alternate #2 would be reconsidered at a later date if/when funds were available.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Ms. Abrahm, the Board unanimously voted to accept the base bid of \$385,000 for auditorium ceiling replacement at Ruston High and toilet restoration on the north end of Ruston Junior High and the \$149,000 bid for additive alternate #1 for toilet restoration at Dubach School, which were both submitted by Ouachita Builders of West Monroe.

In order to canvass returns for the successful election on April 29, 2017, for Consolidated School District No. 1 renewals of Proposition No. 1 a special tax, Proposition No. 2 a special tax, and Proposition No. 3 a maintenance and operation tax, , the Board must adopt a resolution according to Grant Schlueter, Bond Attorney. Total votes cast for

Proposition No. 1 were: 1,506 FOR and 563 AGAINST; therefore, it was APPROVED by a majority of 943 votes or 72.8%. Total votes cast for Proposition No. 2 were: 1,489 FOR and 581 AGAINST. It was APPROVED by a majority of 908 votes or 71.9%. Total votes cast for Proposition No. 3 were: 1,506 FOR and 564 AGAINST: therefore, it was APPROVED by a majority of 942 votes or 72.8%. He said it was gratifying to see such a high passing rate from the voters. Mr. Schlueter asked the Board to adopt the resolution.

Mr. Mitcham commended Superintendent Mike Milstead and the administration for getting the word out to the community. Mr. Schlueter applauded Mr. Milstead and Mr. Murphy for planning well in advance of the expiration of the taxes.

Upon a motion by Ms. Wiley, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to adopt the Resolution canvassing the returns and declaring the result of the election in the Consolidated School District No. 1, for Proposition No. 1 a special tax, Proposition No. 2 a special tax, and Proposition No. 3 a maintenance and operation tax on Saturday, April 29, 2017.

As a result of cleaning and organizing the Maintenance Facility, several items were no longer needed. Ricky Edmiston, Supervisor of Auxiliary Services, called attention to a list of the items and asked that they be declared surplus so he could dispose of them.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dowling, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to declare the items presented on Mr. Edmiston's list as surplus and grant authority to the administration to dispose of all items in a prudent manner.

As work on the Ruston High School New Tech classrooms and boys' and girls' soccer facilities project was drawing to an end, Mr. Payton announced that it was time to

consider a change order to close it out. The contractor was also requesting 51 days for the additional work and rain. Items included in the *credit* change order for \$803.40 were:

- Item #1 Repair bad area and drain on existing RHS roof – add \$3,201.00;
- Item #2 Rework drainage path at New Tech – add \$7,480.00;
- Item #3 New gates at soccer building gateway – add \$6,500.00;
- Item #4 Credit for Rip Rap (New Tech) – credit \$650.00;
- Item #5 Credit for sleepers (RHS girls' gym) – credit \$14,975.00; and
- Item #6 Credit for remaining allowances – credit \$2,359.40.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Anders, the Board unanimously voted to approve *credit* change order #1 in the amount of \$803.40 for work on the Ruston High School New Tech classrooms and boys' and girls' soccer facilities project with the addition of 51 work and rain days.

In addition, James Payton, suggested that Substantial Completion documents for the New Tech and soccer facilities be executed after thorough review by the architect and him.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Mr. Dowling, 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 High School New Tech classrooms and boys' and girls' soccer facilities project.

President Mitcham announced that this was the time specified for a public hearing and for public comments regarding tax millages for 2017. Hearing no comments or questions, he turned the floor over to Mr. Murphy.

The time had arrived to adopt millages for 2017 announced George Murphy. He proposed that the millages remain the same as last year with the exception of

the General Obligation Bonds for the Choudrant District being reduced from 20.00 mills to 18.00 mills and the General Obligation Bonds for the Simsboro District being reduced from 7.75 mills to 7.25 mills. Mr. Murphy asked the Board to adopt a Resolution, which he read in full, to levy the millages.

Mr. Mitcham asked if any of the public or board members had questions. Hearing none he asked for the Board's pleasure regarding the matter.

Upon a motion by Ms. Best, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to adopt the resolution to levy millages for 2017 as follows:

*Resolution*

<i>Constitutional Tax (La. Const. Art. VII, Sect. 13)</i>	<i>3.91 mills</i>
<i>Special Maintenance &amp; Operation</i>	<i>4.57 mills</i>
<i>Special Repair &amp; Equipment</i>	<i>4.57 mills</i>
<i>Parish wide Maintenance &amp; Operation</i>	<i>9.47 mills</i>
<i>Parish wide Maintenance &amp; Operation</i>	<i>7.84 mills</i>
<i>Ruston School District #1</i>	<i>2.28 mills</i>
<i>Simsboro School District #3</i>	<i>2.99 mills</i>
<i>Dubach School District #5</i>	<i>3.25 mills</i>
<i>Choudrant School District #6</i>	<i>2.64 mills</i>
<i>General Obligation Bonds Ruston SD #1</i>	<i>11.00 mills</i>
<i>General Obligation Bonds Simsboro SD #3</i>	<i>7.25 mills</i>
<i>General Obligation Bonds Choudrant SD #6</i>	<i>18.00 mills</i>

Voting by roll call FOR the above motion: Debbie Abrahm, Otha Anders, Michael Barmore, Lisa Best, Curtis Dowling, David Ferguson, Danny Hancock, Lynda Henderson, Trott Hunt, George Mack, Jr., Joe Mitcham, and Susan Wiley.

Voting AGAINST the motion: None.

Absent and not voting: None.

Work on the spirit building and freshman locker project at Ruston High School was also about to be completed. James Payton announced that it was time to consider

a change order to close it out. The contractor was requesting 36 additional work and rain days. Items included in the *credit* change order for \$9,830.00 were:

Item #1 Install a two hour rated shaft wall to encapsulate the rigid frame at the fire wall – add \$7,257.00; and

Item #2 Credit for remaining contingency and hardware allowances – credit \$17,087.00.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Ms. Henderson, the Board unanimously voted to approve *credit* change order #3 in the amount of \$9,830.00 for work on the Ruston High School spirit building and freshman locker project with the addition of 36 work and days.

In addition, Mr. Payton, suggested that Substantial Completion documents for the spirit building and freshman locker project at Ruston High School be executed after thorough review by the architect and him.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Dowling, 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 High School spirit building and freshman locker project.

Ms. Bastion presented another policy that had been recommended for revision. She asked board members to study proposed revisions to the JGB – *School Wellness* policy until the next meeting.

President Mitcham apologized to the Board for not handling properly the renewal of the Superintendent's contract at the March meeting. An Executive Committee meeting should have been called, but it wasn't. He appreciated Walter Abbott, Publisher &

Editor of Lincoln Parish News Online, pointing that out because it caused the administration to discover the ending date needed to be changed in order to follow the CED - *Employment of the Superintendent* policy.

Lynda Henderson, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, shared the Committee's two-fold recommendation to renew the Superintendent's contract for a period of three and one-half years and increase his salary by \$10,000.00 effective July 1, 2017.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Mack, the Board unanimously voted to accept the recommendation from the Executive committee and:

1. Renew Superintendent Mike Milstead's contract for a period of three and one-half years – from July 1, 2017, through December 30, 2020; and
2. Increase the Superintendent's salary by \$10,000.00 effective July 1, 2017.

Dr. Doris Lewis, Director of Human Resources, voiced the following personnel items:

1. Retirement of the following effective May 27, 2017:  
  
Sonja Cardwell, itinerant school nurse; and  
  
Amy Pilgreen, enrichment teacher at Ruston Elementary.
2. Resignation of Rene Overby, special education teacher at Simsboro, effective May 28, 2017.
3. Rescission of resignation of Kenya Morris, teacher at Glen View, effective April 20, 2017.
4. Employment of Jennifer James, itinerant school nurse, effective August 7, 2017, replacing Sonja Cardwell who was retiring.

5. Retirement of Dorethea Smith, bus driver in the Ruston area, effective May 25, 2017.
6. Employment of Edwin C. Bryan, bus driver in the Ruston area, effective August 10, 2017, replacing Dorethea Smith who was retiring.

Sales taxes collected for the period ending April 30, 2017, totaled \$1,663,898, George Murphy reported. Looking back three years, it appears that collections will end up for the year between what was collected in 13-14 and 14-15. For the month, they were down 4.74%, and year-to-date they were down over 21%. Recoveries through audits already totaled more than the previous year with \$198,767 coming in. Year-to-date that was up over 140%.

Moving on to the financial statement for March 2017, Mr. Murphy said the Total Fund Balance was down over a million dollars compared to February 2017, and down over \$1.5 mill compared to March 2016. He noted no deficit spending in any of the funds.

Earlier in the day the administration had a meeting with David Charpentier, Vice President with Brown and Brown, to discuss carving out a portion of retirees and setting them up in a separate health care plan. Humana has a plan where the federal government, through Medicare, picks up a higher percentage of the cost of the plan. They intend to meet with retirees to share information, get feedback, answer questions, and see if they're amenable to the change. If they are, George Murphy will bring a recommendation to the Board in July. He believes it's the right approach to save the retirees and the School Board money. Mr. Murphy also mentioned the annual wellness visits for active employees and their spouses who are covered and the penalty of \$25 a month on insurance premiums for each person who fails to have that done each year. For the first year that will become

effective July 1, 2017, and last through June 30, 2018, with penalties to begin in January 2019. This was being done to encourage people to take responsibility for their health care and catch problems and conditions in the early stages. Retirees will be exempt from the Wellness Plan.

In his Health Care Fund report, George Murphy said a loss was experienced for the month ending March 2017. The fund was down \$787,688 for the first three months of the year. He will closely monitor the fund and may have to make additional recommendations for changes in September or October of 2017.

James Payton said that the contractors really did a good job on the renovated and new buildings. They are very nice and the district should be proud of them. The majority of credit goes to the architect, Mike Walpole, who supervises, watches all that goes on, and requires quality workmanship. He narrated pictures in his construction update.

1. Three additional classrooms were added to New Tech at Ruston High School. Because the school year was so advanced, they will not be occupied until the fall.
2. RHS's spirit building was complete, and they have moved in. It contained two parts, one for the cheerleaders and one for the dance line.
3. A short drive was built from James Street to the fence around the freshman locker facility that was adjacent to the varsity locker room at RHS. It is comparable to the varsity side and is a very nice facility.
4. Two brick columns near the soccer facility have 'James Field' across the top, and two bronze plaques to go on the sides have been ordered. A gate will be added across that area to secure the stadium when necessary.
5. The RHS girls' and boys' soccer facilities are complete and look good.

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

1. A couple of job responsibility changes had been made: Lisa Wilmore was moved from Title I Facilitator to Secondary Supervisor since that slot was vacant. Kim Shackelford was moved from Math Coach/Title I Facilitator to Title I Director effective July 1, 2017. She will overlap with Willie Washington until he retires.
2. Mayor Ronnie Walker will attend the June board meeting to narrate a power point presentation on the Athletic Complex that is being built south of town. He will also share how it might impact the school district.
3. Recognition of retirees would again be done at their schools or locations in lieu of a reception in the lobby of the Central Office. He believes that was fitting last year and appreciated by the retirees.
4. High school graduations begin in two weeks with the first one, Choudrant, on Monday (15<sup>th</sup>), followed by Ruston High's on Tuesday (16<sup>th</sup>), and finally Simsboro's on Thursday (18<sup>th</sup>).
5. He and three others are traveling to Kansas City in a couple of weeks to visit year-round schools that have been incorporated in the last three years. The success there has been impressive. At the next board meeting Mr. Milstead would like to show a video sharing results of a study showing how much time an average child in poverty loses in the six years between kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. If that can be remedied by lengthening a school calendar, he believes it is incumbent on Lincoln Parish to do that as it is what is best for those students. A grant was being written with Louisiana Tech that could possibly refund the overages that come with a year-round school.
6. He appreciates those who were able to attend the very meaningful Adopt –a-School celebration that was held last week.
7. Two invitations were placed in portfolios from Lincoln ACHIEVE. Both worthwhile events were scheduled for Tuesday, May 9, the Community Volunteers at 11:45 a.m. and Celebration of Champions at 5:00 p.m. He urged board members to attend and show their support.
8. A Lincoln Parish Schools Community Engagement Plan was also placed in portfolios. He summarized the talking points related to how the system

can better measure and gauge what the community's expectations are from teachers, board members, parents, etc. Following step one, he has met with six or seven different schools on his Superintendent's Listening Tour and will continue until he meets with all of them. Step two is a survey for educators, parents and families to determine satisfaction, and step three is focus groups that are going to be administered by Keystone Policy Center. He urged board members to attend at least one of the eight focus groups that will meet in June and early July to hear insights from educators, parents and the community that will be used to develop an overall Community Engagement Plan and better the school system. He intends for the survey to be done each year and believes it will be a very valuable tool. Board members should turn in names of anyone they know who would be good and possibly interested in serving on an 8-15 member focus group. Julie Stephenson, Teacher Pipeline Lead/University Liaison, is facilitating the process.

9. Ruston High School was recently ranked nationally by the *U. S. News & World Reports*. That was a big deal and puts them in with the Baton Rouge Magnet, New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics, and Caddo Parish Magnet who have no special education students. To be ranked with that group of high schools and named to one of the most prestigious lists of educational ranks in the United States is a tribute to all of the hard work that has gone on at Ruston High School over the last several years, he opined
10. Placed in portfolios was a letter from the father of the National Merit Finalist who was recognized at the April meeting, Hannah Scheaffer. In it he talks about the Lincoln Parish school system and all of the advantages that she had being in the public schools in the community.
11. The RHS ecoCAR team placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the United States in Detroit recently. That was a very big deal. They were 2 places from 3<sup>rd</sup> place, which would have earned them on an all-expense-paid trip by Shell Oil to London, England, to demonstrate the car. A non-RHS student, from Choudrant High, did become part of the team for the first time. He hopes to have a student or two from Simsboro next year as it is not limited to only RHS students. The program is expensive so it can't be replicated at all of the high schools, but the administration does want all students to participate who would like to.

After a question from the public, Mr. Mitcham reminded board members that Tier 3 Financial Disclosure forms are due in May.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Ms. Best, the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

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Mike Milstead, Secretary

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Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President