

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD  
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, September 1, 2015 6:00 p.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, September 1, 2015, 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 Abraham, Mr. Otha Anders, Mr. Mike Barmore, Mr. David Ferguson, Mr. Danny Hancock, Ms. Lynda Henderson, Mr. Trott Hunt, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, and Ms. Susan Wiley.

Ms. Lisa Best and Mr. Curtis Dowling were absent.

President Anders called the meeting to order, and Mr. Hancock gave the invocation. Ms. Abraham led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag. Mr. Anders welcomed those in attendance.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the agenda as amended adding one item of New Business: *Substantial completion documents for Glen View renovation and construction project.*

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on August 4, 2015, as submitted.

The Building and Grounds Committee met earlier in the evening at 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee Chairperson, Trott Hunt, said Architect Mike Walpole gave a brief update on all of the projects under his domain. They were all going pretty well. The first item of business to come before the committee was a change order on the I. A. Lewis and Ruston Elementary project. At I. A. Lewis there was a need to extend the sewer (\$28,812.40) and construct a French

drain (\$26,770.00). At Ruston Elementary rotting fascia and soffit needed to be repaired (\$3,115.11). Using \$20,000.00 of the contingency allowance to offset the cost would leave a balance of \$38,597.51. An additional 18 days would also be needed. Mr. Hunt shared the committee's motion to approve the change order.

The Board unanimously voted to approve change order #2 on the I. A. Lewis and Ruston Elementary renovation and construction project with an addition of \$38,697.51 to the contract price and an increase of 18 days to the contract time.

The Building and Grounds Committee also considered change order #2 on the security project at Glen View and Hillcrest because the construction of a reading observation lab at the schools was desirable. The estimated costs were \$25,000.00 and \$23,000.00 and would require 21 more days. Mr. Hunt shared the committee's motion to approve the change order.

The Board unanimously voted to approve change order #2 on the security project at Glen View and Hillcrest Elementary adding \$48,000.00 to the contract cost and 21 days to the contract.

The final item of business the Building and Grounds Committee considered was bids received on the Ruston Junior High construction and renovation project. The three bids opened on August 20, 2015, were approximately 15% over the budgeted amount; however, the committee wanted to go ahead with the acceptance of the lowest bid as there was money in the contingency fund. Chairperson Hunt shared the Building and Ground Committee's motion to accept Traxler's bid of \$4,625,000.00.

The Board unanimously voted to accept the bid submitted by Traxler Construction of \$4,625,000.00 for the renovation and construction project at Ruston Junior High School.

The Finance Committee also met prior to the start of the Regular Session, but at 5:45. Chairperson, Lynda Henderson, said the Business Manager presented the proposed budget to the committee. She asked him to summarize it for the Board. George Murphy:

Called attention to Exhibit "A" that showed a projected surplus fund balance of \$461,465. He used conservative estimates of revenue and expenditures in preparing the budget and budgeted the same sales tax revenue as last year even though he realized that may change – as it did last year. A 15<sup>th</sup> check was included, but its payment depends on sales tax revenues coming in as they did last year. A recommendation regarding the same would be brought to the Board in May if needed. Concerning personnel, the administration worked extremely hard to keep numbers down, and there was only a net increase of 6 employees paid with MFP funds. Most of the new Reading Recovery Program was funded primarily with Title I funds. He opined the school system can operate, and the conservative proposed budget would help reach the goal of acquiring \$15,000,000 in the unassigned fund balance to help with future bond ratings with Standards and Poor's.

Ms. Henderson shared the Committee's motion to recommend that the entire Board adopt the proposed budget for 2-15-2016.

President Anders thanked the entire Business Department for the work that went into the preparation of the budget.

Otha Anders announced that it was time for a public hearing on the budget. Hearing no comments, the time for a public hearing closed.

The Board unanimously voted to adopt the 2015-2016 proposed budget as presented, 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 Director of Title I, Willie Washington, was pleased to introduce Norman Hanes, Chief Executive Officer with the Lincoln Health Foundation. Mr. Hanes reminded Board members that the Lincoln Health Foundation was formed in 1996 as the supporting foundation to the Lincoln Health System, which was the parent organization to Lincoln General Hospital. Things changed for the Foundation in 2007 when the hospital sold to the Community Hospital System out of Nashville. When that occurred, Lincoln Health Foundation became a private, non-operating foundation with the sole responsibility under the supervision of the Louisiana

Attorney General to administer the proceeds from the sale of the hospital. At that time, it amounted to approximately \$22,000,000. Five percent of their net assets per year were required to be distributed into Lincoln Parish specifically for health-related issues. Very soon after the hospital was sold, a health needs assessment of Lincoln Parish was conducted by an outside organization. Initiatives that were of considerable concern were determined, and it became obvious that one of the best ways to address the concerns and employ the funds was through the Lincoln Parish school system. Four major initiatives were embarked on through the Foundation; they were: access to health care, exercise and nutrition, childhood obesity, and access to mental health services for the students. He distributed a handout that showed since 2009 the Lincoln Health Foundation had been responsible for providing about \$2.4 million into the school system out of a total distribution of \$7.3 million. On average, the Foundation contributed about 33%-35% of its total distributions per year in the Lincoln Parish school system. He called attention to a summary of the four above-mentioned initiatives with the largest being access to health care being funded at \$307,300 in 2015-2016. On behalf of the Foundation, he thanked the School Board for what they have done to assist in their efforts to improve the health of students while working with the LPSB employees Kay Bradford, Grant Writer, and Sonja Cardwell, School Nurse.

Graduation rates and graduation index were discussed by Donna Doss, Accountability/Testing Coordinator. She called attention to a slide showing what the high schools' School Performance Scores (SPS) are based on. Divided into quarters, they were: EOC, an assessment; ACT, an assessment; graduation index; and graduation rate. Mrs. Doss distributed a handout and explained the different aspects. Regarding graduation rates and those starting

high school in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade graduating with at least a regular diploma in four years, with a state goal for 2015 of 71%, Ruston High School's was 87%, Simsboro High's was 95%, and Choudrant High's was 100%. Because all of the Lincoln Parish high schools exceeded the state's goal, all of them will be rewarded with extra points. The graduation index deals with the strength of the diploma with scores ranging from 160 to a 0 for a drop out. Ruston High's index was 96.4, Simsboro High's was 104.1, and Choudrant High's was 114.4.

ACT scores for the schools were released from the National Foundation about two weeks ago. Donna Doss didn't share those because of a controversy that she was appealing since one of the schools showed only 9 graduates, which she knew was an error. Although these were based on the last ACT the students took, for SPS purposes the state uses the students' highest scores on record in their calculations. They use a sliding scale and the numbers were: Ruston High – 72.9, Simsboro High – 62.9, and Choudrant High - 85.3. For the first time since accountability was introduced and progress points had been calculated, all of the high schools received progress points or bonus points that will be added on at the end to the final calculations of SPS. These are based on how much improvement was shown beginning when the students first attended school in Lincoln Parish. For high school grades only, Choudrant High received 3.125, Ruston High received 6.427, and Simsboro High received 7.481. Ms. Doss said she was excited about all of the calculations, and they looked really good for the high schools.

The school system experienced a very successful opening of school for 15-16, reported Mary Null, Assistant Superintendent. Much planning and work was done during the summer, and she believes that is the main reason for the smooth opening. As of August 31, compared to the same date last year, the district has a few less students, but she believes the numbers may be

equal by the October 1 MFP count. Over 6,400 students, including the preschool children, are attending school in Lincoln Parish public schools.

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

1. Retirement of Patricia Cochran, math teacher at Ruston High, effective August 17, 2015.

2. Resignation of the following:

Cherry Shaw, teacher at Hillcrest Elementary, effective August 7, 2015;

Martie Clary, art teacher at Hillcrest/Glen View, effective August 14, 2015;

Bakari Maxwell, special education teacher at Ruston Elementary, effective July 30, 2015; and

Shelia Barber, as special education teacher effective August 6, 2015.

3. Points of Reference/Transfer of the following effective August 17, 2015:

Amy Dakin in a new special services coordinator position at Cypress Springs Elementary;

Misty Falting in a new speech slot at Glen View Elementary because of student numbers;

Anna Aswell as teacher at Hillcrest Elementary replacing Kennedy (Coates) Haddox who transferred to gifted/talented;

Kennedy (Coates) Haddox as itinerant gifted/talented replacing Robin Davidson who retired; and

Tammy Schales as teacher at Simsboro Elementary replacing Kelly Hammond who transferred to special education.

4. Employment of the following effective August 11, 2015, unless otherwise noted:

Beth Rinehart, business teacher at Choudrant High, replacing penny Warner who was granted leave without pay;

Rocelyn Harrison, special education paraprofessional at Choudrant High effective August 20, 2015, replacing JoeAnn Spencer who retired;

LeJoyce Adams, special education teacher at Hillcrest Elementary replacing Anna Aswell who transferred to regular education;

Meredith Sanders as teacher at Hillcrest Elementary replacing Cherry Shaw who resigned;

Anna Alexander as art teacher at Hillcrest/Glen View replacing Martie Clary who resigned;

Daniel Flores as special education teacher at Howard School replacing Jessica Jones who transferred;

Gabrielle Bourgeois as science teacher at I. A. Lewis replacing Rayne McCarthy who transferred;

Michelle Scott as special education teacher at Ruston Elementary replacing Bakari Maxwell who resigned;

Hayley Schaff as teacher at Ruston Elementary replacing Tammy Schales who transferred;

Mary Cahee as special education teacher at Ruston Elementary replacing Renee Laird who moved to reading interventionist;

Tim Hancock as agriculture teacher at Ruston High effective August 10, 2015, replacing Mark Milstead who transferred;

Denise Moller as social studies teacher at Ruston High replacing Bob Garrett who transferred;

Margaret Boudreaux as gifted/talented art teacher at Ruston High replacing Becky Lowe who resigned;

Johnathan Hardy as math/coach at Ruston High effective July 20, 2015, replacing Crystal Almond who resigned;

Mary Claire Smith as social studies teacher at Ruston Junior High replacing Lisa Lagattuta who retired;

Matthew Petch as social studies/coach at Ruston Junior High effective July 20, 2015, replacing Steve Wooley who transferred;

Melissa Jackson as speech therapist at Simsboro Elementary replacing Misty Falting who transferred;

Misty Owens as ELA at Simsboro High replacing Beth Waldron who resigned;

Dana Tilley as math/science teacher at Simsboro High replacing Sue Price who transferred;

Kaitlyn Mercer as business teacher at Simsboro High replacing Connie Wood who resigned;

Krystal Phillips as science teacher at Simsboro High replacing Jeanine Edgecomb who resigned; and

Rexie Roberts as special education teacher at Simsboro High replacing Letitia Freeman who transferred.

5. Employment of Larry Drayton as craftsman for school food service effective August 10, 2015, replacing Jerry Cole who transferred.

6. Retirement of the following:

Elsie McGuire as bus driver aide in the Ruston district effective August 14, 2015; and

Doris Rogers as bus driver in the Choudrant district effective August 19, 2015.

7. Retirement effective August 5, 2015, of Jo Ann Castine, school food service technician at Dubach School.

She also said the annual Hiring Summary was placed in board members' portfolios.

Ms. Null stated what a tremendous help Dr. Lewis had been as a recent addition to the Human Resource department.

Sales tax collections for August 2015 were up 49.04% over the same month last year with a total of \$1,863,137 being collected, according to George Murphy. Year-to-date sales tax figures were already over \$2,000,000 more than the previous year, which was great. Recoveries through audits during the month were \$49,333, and year-to-date those were up over 164% compared to the same two months last year. In the 67 and 79 sales tax fund, \$846,881 was collected, and

\$1,016,255 was collected in the 93 and 00 fund. The primary reason given for the increases was oil and gas extractions and without them things would be “flat,” he related.

Although June and July 2015 financial statements were included in packets, Mr. Murphy said he'd summarize the July report that was very similar to July 2014. The General Fund was up. The 5 mill maintenance fund and all of the ad valorem and M&O funds were showing deficits; that will continue until property tax money is received in November or December when collections come in. The sales tax funds were doing extremely well and were up as reported earlier in the meeting.

In July 2015, the Health Care Fund was still having problems and was down \$415,806 and \$1,116,194 year-to-date. He reminded board members that changes were already being implemented with the bulk of them in the prescription plan effective January 1, 2016; however, as the year progresses some of the revenue generated by oil and gas extractions may have to be used to fund the Health Care Fund. Further changes and even premium changes may have to be made in the future if the upcoming changes don't bring the fund back into the black.

Jeff Robinson, board attorney, reminded board members that they passed a Resolution in April to nominate two different tracts to the mineral board to negotiate oil, gas, and mineral leases and bid out the right for exploration. Copies were distributed of the bid packets that were sent along with the bids that were received. The competitive bidding process came up on August 10, and he called attention to a bid form on the 110.681 acre tract. The winning bidder was Antrim Exploration with a bid of \$2,253 per acre for a total of \$249,364.29. Stipulations that were included in the resolution was at least a \$1,000 bid per acre and 25% royalty interest. The bid exceeded that with \$2,253 per acre and 25% royalties. The other tract, for 15.230 acres, also

was bid at \$2,253 per acre for a total amount of \$34,313.19 and 25% interest. Antrim Exploration was awarded the bid on that tract as well. He hopes there will actually be some exploration on the lands and more oil and gas monies will be received.

Following a month of study, Ms. Null asked for a vote on the proposed revisions to policy *Complaints and Grievances* – GAE.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve the revised *Complaints and Grievances* – GAE policy.

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. Donna Doss asked that revisions to the 2015-2016 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 Ms. Abrahm, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve the revised 2015-2016 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.

A 1999 Dodge van 3500 was of no further use to the child nutrition program. Mr. Payton shared their request that the same be declared as surplus.

Upon a motion by Ms. Henderson, seconded by Mr. Hunt, the Board unanimously voted to declare the 1999 Dodge van 3500 as surplus and grant permission to dispose of it through the

bid process.

Because they were nearing completion on the Glen View renovation and construction project, James Payton requested permission to execute Substantial Completion documents. At that point, the space could be occupied and utilized for its intended use.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, 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 the Glen View renovation and construction project.

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

1. Included in packets were a couple of extra items. The publication, *Louisiana Life*, had some information about the various candidates for Governor. He asked board members to send them to a school for use in their instructional programs when they were finished with them.
2. Prior to the meeting on October 6, 2015, a picture of the board has been scheduled at 5:45 p.m.
3. He reiterated from the instructional faculty's first day of school, excitement has been noted in the administrators and the teachers. They were enthusiastic about school starting and looking forward to a very good school year. In addition, in the short time he has been superintendent he has been impressed by the super job the office staff does helping people throughout the district. He has a meeting scheduled tomorrow with principals and staff to debrief them on the board meeting and to give them necessary information for the school year. Kudos to the office staff, he communicated.
4. Reading Intervention was coming along quite well. The nine Reading Recovery teachers have completed surveying the 150 students whose needs will be addressed. Strengths and weaknesses of the lowest performing first-grade students who are not special education have been identified. Now the instructional process of meeting with the students will begin on September 1, 2015, five students a day, one-on-one, and then with two groups of students in the afternoon. By the end of the first semester, the goal is to have one-half or more of the students on target and ready to roll. He hopes to have a Reading Recovery demonstration at the meeting in February at Glen View Elementary. Hopefully the process will start over at midterm with another group of students.
5. He is proud of the security systems that have been improved and/or put in place. He was surprised to be able to test some of them when the police called regarding a shooter in the area on September 1 and recommended the schools be placed in least restrictive lock down. It was handled

extremely well by all of the school personnel. He urged board members, when contacted by parents regarding something like the above-mentioned, to urge them to leave the students at school as they are safer there than any other place.

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, the meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

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Mike Milstead, Secretary

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Otha L. Anders, President