

# LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

Ruston, Louisiana

## REGULAR SESSION

**Tuesday, August 2, 2016 6:00 p.m.**

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, August 2, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Parish School Board Office, 410 South Farmerville Street, Ruston, Louisiana. Members present were Ms. Debbie Abrahm, Mr. Otha Anders, Mr. Michael Barmore, Mr. Curtis Dowling, Mr. David Ferguson, Ms. Lynda Henderson, Mr. Trott Hunt, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, and Ms. Susan Wiley.

Ms. Lisa Best and Mr. Danny Hancock were absent.

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

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

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Wiley, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on July 12, 2016, as submitted.

After a month of perusing proposed policy changes, Mary Null, Assistant Superintendent, asked board members to approve revisions to 5 and the addition of 1.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dowling, seconded by Ms. Henderson, the Board unanimously voted to approve revisions to EBBG – *Hazardous Substances*, GBD – *Employment of Personnel*; GBI – *Evaluation of Personnel*; GBL – *Tenure*; and IDCH – *Home Study Program* and the addition of DIEA – *Preservation of School Board Records Due to Legal Action*.

The lone bid for the purchase of gasoline and diesel for 2016-2017 was opened on July 20, 2016. Supervisor of Auxiliary Services, Ricky Edmiston, recommended the acceptance of the same.

Upon a motion by Ms. Abrahm, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to accept the only bid meeting specifications for gasoline and diesel for the 16-17 school year, which was as follows:

RelaDyne Hill Oil	Unleaded Regular	.1085
	Unleaded Plus	.1085
	Unleaded Premium	.1085
	Low Sulfur Road Use Diesel Fuel	.1125
	Regular No. 2 Grade Diesel Fuel	.1325

George Murphy, Business Manager, said bond attorney with Foley and Judell, Grant Schlueter, had recently notified him that the Series 2010 Choudrant District Bonds were refunding candidates based on current interest rates.

Under current market conditions and if a favorable interest rate can be obtained instead of the current 4% to 4.125%, according to the underwriter the projected savings to property taxpayers of the district would be in excess of \$220,000. An underwriter with Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc., Mr. Charlie Sides, was in attendance. Mr. Schlueter communicated that there would be no debt extension, only the annual payments would be reduced. He called attention to a resolution for the Board's consideration that would give preliminary approval and permit him to apply for the State Bond Commission's approval at their September meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Anders, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to approve the resolution giving preliminary approval to the issuance of not exceeding Seven Million Dollars (\$7,000,000) of General Obligation School Refunding Bonds, of Choudrant School

District No. 6 of the Parish of Lincoln, State of Louisiana; making application to the State Bond Commission for approval of said Bonds; and providing for other matters in connection therewith.

Because of a question from the public, it was recently noted that there was no legal document between the Board and the Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. Superintendent Mike Milstead called attention to a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement that had been prepared by the board's attorney, Jeff Robinson. If approved, the agreement would need to be reevaluated before the 31<sup>st</sup> of each December.

Mr. Robinson said the CEA merely formalized an informal agreement between the two entities. He believes the school system definitely receives more bang for their buck than the \$660 annual dues.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Ms. Abrahm, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

Board members were reminded by George Murphy that each fall schools are allocated monies from the 1979 sales tax fund to provide supplements for additional library supplies (\$2.50), classroom supplies (\$3.75), office supplies and equipment repair/purchase (\$4.00), expenses for student services (\$3.75), debate and speech (\$2.00), band allotment (\$3.50 at I. A. Lewis, \$3.85 at junior high, and \$10.00 at high school), and kindergarten (\$120.00 per teacher). These funds are distributed on a per pupil basis and sent directly to the schools to be disbursed by the principal. He recommended sending the per pupil allotments shown above which were the same amounts as last year. If approved, the total amount to be disbursed to the schools would be \$109,325.50.

Upon a motion by Ms. Wiley, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve the fall allocations of school instructional supply money as outlined on the

schedule disseminated by Mr. Murphy.

Adding a sidewalk to the basketball court and deducting liquidated damages for the project going over the contract time comprised change order #5 on the I. A. Lewis project. Approval of the change order would add \$1,534.95 for the sidewalk, plus 1 day, and \$10,250.00 would be deducted charging one-half of the actual days for damages reported James Payton, New Construction Coordinator. He requested approval of change order #5. In addition, the work was nearly complete, so he also requested permission to execute substantial completion documents based on the recommendation of the architect, Mike Walpole, after his preparation of the final punch list and other appropriate documents.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Mack, the Board unanimously voted to:

1. Approve change order #5 on the I. A. Lewis renovation and construction project increasing the contract price by \$1,534.93, adding 1 day to the contract time, and deducting \$10,250.00 for liquidated damages; and
2. Grant permission and authorize the Superintendent, his staff, and the architect to execute the substantial completion documents for the I. A. Lewis project.

Three bids were opened on July 28 for the Choudrant athletic complex parking lot and drainage work. Amethyst Construction of West Monroe, Dreher Contracting, LLC of Bastrop, and T.L. Construction, LLC of Alexandria submitted bids ranging from \$224,465.00 to \$304,320.00. Mr. Payton reported that after reviewing the bids, the administration recommended acceptance of the lowest bid.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dowling, seconded by Mr. Anders, the Board unanimously voted to accept the bid of \$224,465.00 submitted by Amethyst Construction and award them as the

contractor for the Choudrant athletic complex parking lot and drainage work.

The Simsboro drainage project was nearly complete according to James Payton. He requested permission to execute substantial completion based on recommendations of the engineer after his preparation of the final punch list and other appropriate documents.

Upon a motion by Mr. Dowling, seconded by Ms. Abrahm, the Board unanimously voted to grant permission and authorize the Superintendent, his staff, and the engineer to execute substantial completion documents for the Simsboro drainage project.

George Murphy called attention to the revised budget for 2015-2016 in order to adjust the original budget to the actual amounts. When the budget was prepared in September of 2015, he expected to end the year with an excess of \$461,465. Instead the school system ended the year with a \$2,124,876 excess. It was a good year, but he reiterated that if a 15<sup>th</sup> check had been paid to employees the year-end grand total would have been a deficit number. Mr. Murphy said it was a wise and prudent decision. The ending fund balance was \$35,246,977. Although that was a healthy balance, he cautioned that much of it might be used in the next few years as he would explain in his Sales Tax report. It was also noted that the School Food Service fund had a loss of \$232,545, which would also be discussed later in the meeting. George Murphy asked for approval of the 2015-2016 revised budget.

Upon a motion by Ms. Wiley, seconded by Mr. Hunt, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the revised 2015-2016 budget.

In a School Food Service update, Mr. Murphy thanked the Supervisor, Doris Marzett, for her hard work over the last few years trying to cut the deficit in the SFS account. Considering six different scenarios, it was determined that the Community Eligibility Program, a relatively new federal program, would permit more students to eat at school *and* provide a monthly gain of

\$13,091. It would allow all of the schools except Choudrant Elementary and Choudrant High School to offer healthy, breakfasts and lunches without charge to all students and without requiring the families to complete individual applications. If the schools in Choudrant were included, the school board would incur an additional \$28,642 loss per month.

Board members were very happy to hear that the Community Eligibility Program would feed so many of the students in Lincoln Parish at no cost to the parents or the school system.

The administration wanted to provide information on what recent professional development had been offered or attended. Lisa Bastion, Chief Academic Officer, distributed a two-page Summer 2016 Professional Development (PD) handout showing 18 opportunities for teachers, 12 for school leaders, and 21 for district staff. She included numbers that participated, which were amazing considering the time period was during the summer. Ms. Bastion noted that one of the sessions enabled a teacher to become certified to teach a short course in CPR as it is now required for every high school student before they graduate. She stated that many of the above-mentioned opportunities were ongoing, and that the 2016-2017 school calendar included 9 days of PD provided: 4 before school starts for students and 5 throughout the year. The extra days of PD would allow teachers to participate without have to be pulled from class and replaced with substitute teaches.

Lincoln Parish graduation rates for 2013-2014 were 87.4, but they had increased to 90.2 for 2014-2015. Donna Doss, Accountability Coordinator, was thrilled to announce that the parish had far surpassed the state's target goal 70.8 by 2015. It was a great achievement! In fact, it was the fifth consecutive year that Lincoln Parish had grown 2 or more points in overall graduation rates. Schools 2014-2015 (because they run a year behind) graduation rates were as follows:

Choudrant High School	98.2	-1.8
Ruston High School	88.0	+1.3
Simsboro High School	93.3	-1.6

Superintendent Mike Milstead reminded board members that Ms. Doss was talking about the cohort rate, which were students that began high school and graduated with at least a regular diploma in 4 years. Obviously others graduated in 5 or 6 years, but were not included in the graduation rate numbers.

Moving on to a Summer Remediation report on grades 9 - 12, Ms. Doss communicated that all 3 of the high schools, Choudrant, Ruston and Simsboro, offered the required number of hours for six different summer remediation courses for 145 eligible-to-retest students. As they will have multiple opportunities to retake the EOC tests, only 87 participated in the summer program or 60%. She was pleased to note that 50% of those participating and testing made a passing achievement level.

Many personnel changes were shared by Dr. Doris Lewis, Human Resources Director.

They were:

1. Resignation of Sheree Toms, special education teacher at I. A. Lewis, effective July 8, 2016.
2. Employment of the following, effective August 8, 2016, unless noted otherwise:
  - Stacey Tassin, special education teacher at Choudrant Elementary replacing Tina Goff who resigned;
  - Karen Boyd, teacher at Cypress Springs replacing Michelle Chauvin who resigned;
  - Kermetria Johnson, teacher at Cypress Springs replacing Shannon Puljak who transferred to interventionist;
  - Sheila Malone, science teacher at I. A. Lewis replacing Gabrielle Bourgeois who resigned;
  - Lynn Edmiston, special education teacher at I. A. Lewis replacing Megan Dunson

who transferred;

Wanda Wilson, special education teacher at I. A. Lewis replacing Sheree Toms who resigned;

Madison Bottoms, math teacher at Ruston High replacing Susan Griffin who retired;

Brooke Robinson, nurse at Ruston High in a new position because of Jump Start;

Lucie Hunt, H&PE/coach at Ruston High replacing Katie Giesse who resigned;

Amanda Chesson, elementary teacher at Simsboro replacing Jennifer Breeding who transferred;

Jeremy Hattaway, math/coach at Simsboro effective July 11, 2016, replacing Jana Crowe who transferred; and

Yulonda Conley, math teacher at Simsboro replacing Anna Baines who resigned.

3. Point of Reference/Transfer of Megan Dunson from I. A. Lewis to special education teacher at Simsboro effective August 8, 2016, replacing Dana Boockoff who resigned.
4. Point of Reference/Transfer of the following school food service personnel effective August 1, 2016:

Cassandra Franklin from Alma J. Brown to manager clerk at Simsboro replacing Jacqueline Burks who transferred;

Antionette Collins from Grambling High to manager clerk at Ruston High replacing Shalacy Collins who transferred;

Marci Mathis from Ruston Junior High to manager at I. A. Lewis replacing Amy Bourgeois who resigned;

Jacqueline Burks from Simsboro to technician at Choudrant Elementary because of increased meal participation;

Martha Gipson from I. A. Lewis to technician at Cypress Springs replacing Scymentress Davis who retired;

Angela Hassen from Ruston High to technician at Hillcrest replacing Trayson Hargrove who transferred;



Mary Walker from Alma J. Brown to technician at I. A. Lewis replacing Odessa Thompson who transferred;

Angela Wesley from Grambling High to technician at I. A. Lewis replacing Martha Gipson who transferred;

Odessa Thompson from I. A. Lewis to technician at Ruston Elementary replacing Vickey Thomas who retired; and

Tameka Patton from Grambling High to technician at Simsboro replacing Mary Jo Torbor who retired.

George Murphy delivered the sales tax collection report for the period ending July 31, 2016. Although collections were down \$1,114,114 compared to the same month last year, he noted that the \$2.7 million collected in July 2015 was the highest amount when compared to July in 2014 and 2013. This year's \$1.6 million was not bad. He doesn't think sales tax collections will drop \$1 million per month all year, but does believe the collections will drop from the previous year's high collections. To have a realistic budget, the administration feels it is prudent to budget at least a 10% decrease in sales taxes for the year. Mr. Murphy reiterated that fund balances have been built up because it was inevitable that deficits would come. He expected to have a budget deficit this year, but believes reserves will allow the school system to weather the financial storm. Next year, he does know the state is further decreasing payments, and he is prepared to deal with that as well.

The health care fund was doing very well; it was up \$393,000 for the month of June and \$1.5 million for the year. George Murphy believes the major changes made in the program last year have made the difference. At the same time, premiums were still very reasonable as they haven't increased since 2009, and the plan covers the things most self-insured plans cover. The applicable persons will meet with David Charpentier, insurance specialist, in the near future to get a recap of 2015 and plan for the future.

In his construction update, James Payton, New Construction Coordinator, said sod, landscaping, and tractor work was being done at I. A. Lewis earlier in the day. There was much cleaning remaining to be done on the inside. Also about 50-60 items were on the punch list for the interior, but furniture was being moved into classrooms. The additional 12,000 square feet and 11 new classrooms will be a nice addition to the school.

At Ruston Junior High, the exterior work was almost finished. They were working on an elevated sidewalk that will eventually have a covered canopy. On the north end, doors and windows were about to be installed, and the walls were being primed and painted. Soon they will install the lockers and work on the ceiling grid. On the south end, a big floor is about to be installed in the ag shop as well as some outside condensing units. The green house can be finished after a concrete driveway is done. The south end maybe substantially completed around the first of September.

Blocking and roofing were in progress on the Ruston High School spirit building. They should be completed in a couple of weeks, and they will move on to the next phase. Drainage work seems to be holding up and working well.

Blocking started earlier today on the RHS freshman locker facility. Roofing will follow.

At New Tech, they are almost ready to pour the footing and grade beams, which will be followed in about a week by the slab being poured. A data line was cut, and a decision will need to be made regarding the routing of the cable for New Tech and the ag building.

Work on the RHS auditorium was not complete but was progressing. The contractor on the project agreed to repair places on the roof of the old part of the building that need attention.

Demolition on the inside of the old RHS freshman dressing room was being done for

that to become a boys' soccer facility. The plumbers and electricians will begin their work when the interior has been completely prepared.

Soil cement and asphalt work will be done next week on the parking lot project at RHS. That project, adding 81 parking places, was almost complete.

Drainage work was being done and parking bumpers were to be moved from the lot near the Choudrant athletic complex. After that, the lot will be striped.

The RHS girls' gym floor is being nailed down and will soon be sanded and finished. Hopefully that project will be completed close to the start of school. A hefty credit should be realized as the subfloor was in pretty good shape.

In a Report of the Superintendent, Mr. Milstead:

1. Called attention to a schedule for a celebration honoring Coach Robert "Demp" Smith in early September. He specifically noted activities on Thursday, September 1, and Friday, September 2. He appreciated Ms. Susan Wiley noting that it was the 40<sup>th</sup> year since he was named the 1<sup>st</sup> African American head football coach at RHS and believes the activities will recognize his efforts in difficult times.
2. Announced the Back-to-School meeting in Ruston High School's auditorium is scheduled for Monday, August 8, at 8:00 a.m. He invited and encouraged board members to attend and mix with about 700 staff members. The format has been changed a little as he allowed faculty members throughout the parish to ask the superintendent any questions they wanted to ask. Answers to some of the questions would be given at that time.
3. Noted that he continues to work on the Capital Outlay Plan, which is what needs to be done to the facilities in the next 5 – 8 years. He is using the strategic academic plan to drive it and everything else. After working with Mr. Murphy on the financial end, he will present it to the Board.
4. All of the administrators, from Assistant Principals through the Directors, met all day yesterday. Everything academic was stressed as well as safety.
5. The new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), replacing No Child Left Behind (NCLB), becomes effective in the 2017-2018 school year. He summarized some of the differences in the two and what could be expected. Another indicator

besides test scores is being added for grades 3-8. States will decide how to measure the students' success in another way besides a test. With a cohort rate and index in high school, that is somewhat done. The states must ID and intervene in high schools where graduation rates are 67% or less. Even though graduation rates will plateau in Lincoln Parish, scoring above 67% is not an issue. He is very proud of that. In addition, 90% of students in special education must be given the same tests as the other students. Only 10% of special education students can be given an alternative test. Curriculums have to be challenging. Finally, while NCLB mandated highly qualified, ESSA doesn't. A teacher must still be certified, but no longer highly qualified effective for the 2017-2018 school year. He feels good about the Act, and that it is a step back from the federal government being involved in the schools. He has a summary that he offered to print for anyone interested.

Mike Barmore invited everyone to visit and tour the newly renovated Dubach School.

Susan Wiley mentioned other activities and specifically a reception planned for Coach Demp Smith, his family, friends, and former players that has been scheduled from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. on September 2, in the Title I building. She invited everyone to attend, and said she appreciates Superintendent Mike Milstead and Ruston High for scheduling the activities and recognition.

Ms. Wiley also invited everyone to a Back to School Hour of Prayer from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. on August 11, 2016, at the Grambling Community Center.

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

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Mike Milstead, Secretary

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Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President