

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, February 7, 2017 10:30 a.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 7, 2017, at 10:30 a.m. at Lincoln Parish Early Childhood Center located at 801 East Mississippi Avenue, 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., and Mr. Joe Mitcham.

Ms. Susan Wiley was absent.

President Mitcham called the meeting to order and welcomed guests. The invocation was given by Mr. Hunt, and Ms. Lisa Bastion, Chief Academic Officer, led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Hunt, 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 January 10, 2017, as presented.

Kathi Pesnell, Administrator of the Early Childhood Center, welcomed board members and others to the preschool. The school opened 7 years ago with 12 teachers, and it had reached capacity at 16 teachers this year. She is impressed with and feels very fortunate to have the faculty, students, and parents she has. Ms. Pesnell called attention to refreshments that had been placed

in the room and asked guests to stay for lunch in the cafeteria, stop by and visit classrooms, and return to the school at any time.

Next on the agenda was to recognize the monumental achievement on January 18, 2017, when Chief Judge Robert James of the U. S. District Court of the Western District of Louisiana approved a Consent Order Declaring Unitary Status and Dismissing Action jointly filed by attorneys for both the United States Department of Justice and the Lincoln Parish School Board. By signing the Consent Order and Final Judgement, the longstanding desegregation case, *United States of America v. Lincoln Parish School Board, et al*, bearing Civil Action No. 12,071, filed in 1966, was resolved. Joe Mitcham presented engraved crystal awards to the following 5 individuals who were instrumental in the process: Otha Anders, former President of the LPSB; Mary Null, Assistant Superintendent; Becky Gemelli, Administrative Assistant; George Murphy, Chief Financial Officer; and Mike Milstead, Superintendent. He had one to give to former Superintendent, Danny Bell, who was unable to attend. Joe Mitcham commended them for the extraordinary participation, time spent, and effort expended to accomplish the tremendous feat. He also thanked Pam Dill and Bob Hammonds, Attorneys with the Hammonds, Sills, Atkins, and Guice law firm, the GIS system, Judge Robbie James, and the individual board members who had served during the past 8 years that Judge James was trying to resolve the matter. Mr. Mitcham read from a beautiful plaque that will be placed in the Central Office for everyone to remember the significant occurrence and know that all students attending school in Lincoln Parish are afforded equal educational

opportunities.

Independent Auditor and partner with Allen, Green & Williamson, Amy Tynes, presented an audit report for the year ending June 30, 2016. She called attention to two reports, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the Single Audit Report.

In the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), the LPSB received an unmodified opinion, a clean opinion, which meant no items were considered suspicious or significant enough to cause the financials to not be stated correctly and no modifications were needed. From the balance sheet, she noted the General Fund had a good, solid Total Fund Balance of \$22,996,140 out of which \$14.6 million of approximately 29% of the total expenditures was unassigned or unrestricted. A column had been added for the Ruston School District #1 bond fund for the \$8 million issued last year for renovation and construction. It had \$5,671,000 remaining at the end of June. Total revenues for the General Fund was \$54.8 million, and total expenses were \$49.9 million. Before any transfers out, that fund had a profit of \$4.9 million; however, after about \$700,000 in transfers, the net change was a \$4.2 million increase in fund balance for the fiscal year. She called attention to profits or losses in the funds making up the General Fund and the Nonmajor Governmental Funds and debt service for each of the school districts and Capital Project Funds.

Moving on to the Single Audit Report, Ms. Tynes said a total of \$7.6 million was received in federal awards. The auditors tested the Title I program this year. She reiterated a clean, unmodified opinion was issued for the financial statement

audit. There were 2 issues of noncompliance related to state law:

1. The sales tax funds variance was 5.4% at year-end instead of the 5% requirement without a budget revision; and
2. The public bid law was not followed when the Grambling Lab School purchased over \$30,000 of band equipment.

In addition, in their audit of federal awards they found 3 significant deficiencies, 1 of which was considered a material weakness and because of the magnitude, it caused them to qualify the opinion for the Title I program. She explained that there were 2 buckets this year, one that the Title I program actually received and spent for the Title I schools and a different program this year, which still fell under the same bucket of funding, but actually flowed through the school system to the Grambling Lab Schools. It was actually administered more through the Grambling Foundation than through the school system. But because the State didn't give the money directly to the program, it was held to the same federal guidelines and requirements as the other Title I money. Several deficiencies were noted in that program.

She went into detail on the final 3 findings that were:

3. The federal bid law was not followed when the Grambling Lab School purchased over \$30,000 of band equipment and proper procedures were not followed regarding the vendor's certification to receive federal funds. (This was the same issue mentioned above, but it hit as a state finding and a federal finding.)
4. Internal controls over disbursement and allowable costs were not followed in the same Title I program and the Title I money received at the school level. They paid about \$105,000 in salaries and benefits for time worked without supporting documentation for the time worked. At the school board level, two individuals' time sheets did not agree with salary

splits between multiple funds or programs so approximately \$38,000 in costs was questioned. This \$146,000 in questioned costs resulted in the finding requiring the opinion on the federal programs to be qualified.

5. Title I targeting, the school system determining which schools are eligible for Title I depending on their makeup of low income students and total enrollment. Numerous school systems were hit with this finding because the State allowed the systems to pull the information from a State data base. Unfortunately the State neither provided enough training nor let school systems know that the data base included pre-k students, which cannot be included in the calculation.

It was her opinion that due to the flow through of funds for the program in Grambling, the school system bore the brunt of insufficient guidance from the State, and there would not have been nearly as many issues with the funding.

Her firm appreciates the great, accommodating staff at the Lincoln Parish School Board.

In closing, Ms. Tynes said she wanted to make the Board aware that the legislative auditors will soon be releasing new, agreed-upon procedures requiring all government entities that submit an audit report to the legislative auditors to undergo the procedures. A lot more time will be required for the audit and the school system's central office staff and school employees. She provided some examples of the changes. The new procedures, which will take effect on June 30, 2017, will be very time consuming. She predicted that it will be an extremely challenging year.

Superintendent Mike Milstead said he appreciates George Murphy, Kathy Pool, Assistant Business Manager, and the staff.

According to George Murphy sales tax collections for the period ending January 31, 2017, were down for the 10th straight month compared to the same months last year. Year-to-date the collections were down 26% or almost \$3.6 million.

In the end of December 2016 financial report, Mr. Murphy said the Unassigned Fund Balance was \$14.6 million. For several years work had been done to bring that number up to the Superintendent's goal of \$15 million. Some of the money may soon be available to use for projects from the Capital Outlay Plan. Compared to December of 2016, the Total Fund Balance was down \$1.7 million primarily due to the decrease in sales taxes.

For the period ending December 2016, the health plan was up \$110,514 communicated Mr. Murphy. It was up \$430,965 year-to-date, which he attributed to the tough decisions the board had made in 2015. Mr. Murphy said he would meet with David Charpentier early in the year to study the plan with the goal of keeping the self-insured program viable.

In her Personnel Report, Dr. Doris Lewis, Director of Human Resources, verbalized the:

1. Retirement of Jackie Risk, teacher at Cypress Springs, effective April 1, 2017.
2. Employment of the following:

Andrew Robinson as P.E./coach at Ruston High effective January 17, 2017, replacing Jarrod Baugh who transferred to head football coach at RHS; and

Julie Stephenson as Teacher Pipeline Lead/University Liaison effective February 27, 2017, in a new TIF grant position.
3. Resignation of Trayson Hargrove, school food service technician, effective January 11, 2017.

4. Employment of the following school food service personnel effective January 12, 2017:

Cynthia King as technician at I. A. Lewis replacing Trayson Hargrove who resigned; and

Dana Wright as clerk/technician at Ruston High replacing Antionette Collins who transferred to Ruston Elementary as manager.

In a construction report, James Payton, New Construction Coordinator, said things were going well and a lot of progress had been made as contractors realize project ending dates are coming up. He narrated pictures of the following:

The Ruston High School spirit building was slated to be completed in mid-March. The parking lot had been poured and that should make 25 - 30 spaces. Most of the exterior work was done excluding landscaping; therefore, most of the work left was on the interior.

The RHS freshman locker facility, with a mid-April completion date, also had mostly interior work remaining. The sheet metal had been installed, and the mansard roof was being installed.

Brick work was finished on the RHS New Tech addition, but sidewalks and hand railings were not done. The big project remaining there was cutting into a wall and relocating a control panel and HVAC equipment so they could connect the old portion of the building with the new. It should be done by mid-March.

The boys' and girls' soccer buildings were being painted. Work was still to be done on the interior. Mr. Payton gave a mid-March completion date on that project as well.

He called attention to an aerial view of the parking lot that had been completed at RHS earlier in the year. He said it was definitely needed and money well spent.

Chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee, Trott Hunt, said he believes the installation of turf a couple of years ago has facilitated the use of the RHS football field by several

other sports and the band. Although a little controversial at the time, he believes it was a good move.

Following a month of studying two policy revisions, Mary Null, Assistant Superintendent, asked board members to approve changes to: *Sick Leave Bank* - GBRIIBB and *Leave Without Pay* - GBRIJ.

Upon a motion Ms. Best, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board unanimously voted to approve revisions to the policies: *Sick Leave Bank* - GBRIIBB and *Leave Without Pay* - GBRIJ.

Formal approval of change order #3 on the Ruston High School New Tech project was requested by James Payton. It included two items whose cost, if approved, would be taken from the contingency allowance:

Allow Vista Construction to install HVAC controls for 4 new mechanical units and relocate the existing control panel to a new location at a cost of \$11,903.10; and

Vista was proposing a change order that would allow the installation of conduit for 8 future exterior cameras in the New Tech addition at a cost of \$660.00.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mr. Anders, the Board unanimously voted to approve change order #3 for the Ruston High School New Tech construction with no additional expense to the Board or extension of contract time.

Lisa Bastion reported very little flexibility in the school calendar for 17-18 because the state mandated numerous testing and testing makeup dates as well as the way holidays and days of the week fall in the coming year. She asked the Board to adopt the proposed calendar that was very similar to the current one except for fewer staff development days. As usual, several

buffer days were built into the calendar.

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the proposed calendar for the 17-18 school year as follows:

Lincoln Parish 2017 - 2018 School Calendar

Staff Development	August 7-9, 2017
All Staff Faculty Meetings	August 10, 2017
First Day of School-Students (1/2 Day)	August 11, 2017
Labor Day	September 4, 2017
Staff Development	September 5, 2017
Columbus Day	October 9, 2017
Staff Development	October 10, 2017
Thanksgiving	November 20-24, 2017
End of First Semester	December 20, 2018
Christmas/New Year	Dec. 21, 2017-Jan. 5, 2018
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	January 15, 2018
Presidents' Day	February 19, 2018
Staff Development	February 20, 2018
Spring/Easter Break	March 26-April 2, 2018
Last Day of School-Students (Full Day)	May 18, 2018
Instructional Staff Workday (1/2 Day)	May 21, 2018

The ceiling in the Ruston High School auditorium was in need of replacement according to James Payton. In addition, the restrooms at Ruston Junior High needed renovating as they were constructed in 1985 and had some privacy issues. He requested permission to advertise for bids for those two items and noted that the cost would be taken from money left over from the 2013 bond project in the Ruston School District.

Architect Mike Walpole said work on the RJHS restrooms would also bring them into ADA compliance.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Ms. Henderson, the Board unanimously voted to grant permission to advertise for bids for a new ceiling in the Ruston High auditorium and restroom renovations at Ruston Junior High.

Eight more policy manual revisions and one addition had

been recommended by Forethought, the policy manual service. Lisa Bastion asked members to study revisions to *Authorized Signatures - DJAA, Acceptable Use For School Computer Systems and the Internet - EFA, School Admission - JBC, Student Assignment - JBCC, Dangerous Weapons - JCDAB, Administration of Medicine - JGCD, Expectant and Parenting Students - JOE, School Board Ethics - BH, and the addition of Code of Conduct for Louisiana School Board Members - BH-E* until the next meeting.

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

1. He appreciated Kathi Pesnell hosting the meeting.
2. In the move to greater use of electronics and less waste of paper, it was the last meeting for which board packets would be copied and mailed. For the March meeting and beyond, board packets and minutes would only be sent electronically for members to access on their new touch-screen Microsoft Surface Pro 3s. A learning curve was to be expected, and technology personnel would be on hand to help with the transition.
3. The LSBA convention begins on Thursday, and nine members (and he) had planned to attend. He hopes to spend some time together while in New Orleans.
4. Cathi Cox-Boniol, James Payton, Mike Walpole, and he have planned to travel to Ohio at the end of the month to visit some model STEM centers for ideas for possible construction at Ruston Junior High and maybe to add some classrooms with STEM concepts at Choudrant High and Simsboro High. He wants to construct buildings from the Capital Outlay Plan in the long-term, best interest of the students.
5. Much had been in the local news recently about a possible year round school in Lincoln Parish. He wanted to be sure board members had a clear understanding of what he means by that and a time frame. Construction would have to be done at RJHS to move 6th graders there, and that has not begun. That would possibly make I. A. Lewis

available for a year round school. By that, he meant a school with a reconfigured calendar that only added 10 or so days to the calendar but had breaks between semesters but no long break in the summer. He is envisioning one K-5 year round school, where parents would voluntarily send their students, manned by teachers in a smaller setting (maybe 10-15 per teacher), and possibly even have a Louisiana Tech or Grambling student helping in each classroom. Many children would benefit from being able to hit the ground running when school begins instead of having to catch up in August from a long summer break. Before the end of school Mr. Milstead would like to have conversations with some focus groups to discuss what a year round school would look like and the benefits to the community. Those students that attend would go back to their outlying school or I. A. Lewis for Ruston School District students after completion of the 5th grade or if they decide to leave after completing an earlier grade. If everything falls into place, and if the Board grants approval, the earliest he sees a year round, dream school opening in Lincoln Parish would be the 18-19 school year. The superintendent is convinced after studying data and other school districts that year round school is the best thing for some of the students in the Lincoln Parish school system.

Chairman Joe Mitcham said Committee Assignments for 2017 were included in packets.

An invitation to board members attending the LSBA Convention was issued by Trott Hunt for dinner on Thursday night. Further details would be sent out.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. on a motion by Lisa Best.

Mike Milstead, Secretary

Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President