

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD  
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, April 2, 2019 10:30 p.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, April 2, 2019, at 10:30 a.m. at Choudrant High School, 2555 Highway 80, Choudrant, Louisiana. Members present were Ms. Debbie Abraham, Mr. Otha Anders, Mr. Michael Barmore, Ms. Lisa Best, Mr. David Ferguson, Dr. David Gullatt, Mr. Danny Hancock, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, and Mr. Hunter Smith.

Ms. Lynda Henderson and Ms. Susan Wiley were absent.

President Mitcham called the meeting to order, and the invocation was given by Ms. Abraham. Ms. Best led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

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

Upon a motion by Dr. Gullatt, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on March 5, 2019, as printed.

Tony Antley, Choudrant High School principal, thanked the board for meeting at the school and welcomed the large crowd. He introduced several of his key front office employees who help make the school run efficiently and help CHS achieve their success. He said it is a busy spring with extra-curricular activities as well as LEAP testing. He reminded the board that the last several years CHS led the parish in School Performance Scores. Mr. Antley referenced the school motto: “make kids successful academically but also make them great citizens in our community and state”

and said they hold all students to this.

A Building and Grounds Committee meeting was held at 10:00 a.m. prior to the 10:30 a.m. start of the Regular Session, and Chairman Danny Hancock summarized what had occurred during that meeting. They discussed building four new classrooms at Choudrant Elementary and the possibility of renovating an area at Ruston High School so that new classrooms could be gained there. The committee also discussed security measures at all schools, specifically the need to harden front entrance security. These projects would be funded with the \$4.4 million insurance settlement from the burned Head Start building. Superintendent Mike Milstead shared with the board that these projects had to be under contract by September 4, 2020.

Missy Wooley, STEM director, stated she was passionate and excited about things to come at the new STEM Center. She had board members engage in two STEM projects. Ms. Wooley then shared several statistics regarding creative thinking and said STEM gives students the opportunity for creative thinking, which leads to adult accomplishments. One of the goals of the STEM Center is to get students to problem solve, encouraging students to feel comfortable thinking outside the box. Other goals of the center are the increase of academic achievement, the promotion of the development of skills, and the opportunity for students to learn in a way that will set them up for potential success. All students, not just a select few, will have the opportunity to gain the skills that will be taught at the STEM Center. After research, she has concluded that collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking are all important but acknowledged that students must continually be offered the opportunity for creativity and critical thinking from kindergarten through high school.

Three facets of the STEM Center are educational opportunities, professional development, and community outreach. Phase 1 will focus on STEM experiences, which will include coding, robotics, and engineering design. Ms. Wooley concluded by stating that it is our responsibility to equip our students with the ability to “figure things out” if they are to succeed in the future.

The following personnel items were shared by Dr. Doris Lewis, Director of Human Resources:

1. Administrative changes effective July 1, 2019:

Keshia Douglas-Osborne, principal at I.A. Lewis, replacing John Young who transferred; and

Dan Gressett, principal at Ruston High School, replacing Ricky Durrett who transferred.

2. Retirement of Diana Grigsby, speech pathologist at Choudrant Elementary, effective May 25, 2019.
3. Disability retirement of Kayla Martin, special education paraprofessional at Ruston Elementary, effective February 7, 2019.
4. Retirement of Vickie Modest, custodian at Glen View Elementary, effective March 2, 2019.
5. Resignation of Lawrence Vernon, custodian at Simsboro School, effective May 31, 2019.

Mr. Milstead introduced the five-member committee for the two principal positions that were mentioned in Dr. Lewis’ report. The committee consisted of Tony Antley, Ricky Durrett, Daryl Savage, Lisa Wilmore, and John Young. Dr. Lewis chaired the committee but did not vote. Keisha Douglas-Osborne and Dan Gressett were the top two vote- getters and were unanimously

recommended as principals at I.A. Lewis and Ruston High School.

Mr. Milstead said both had done excellent jobs as interim principals and stated they would continue that success at the permanent positions. He thanked the board and the committee for their support.

George Murphy, Business Manager, reported March 2019 sales tax collections were down 3.97%. Year-to-date, the fund was down \$1.6 million. Murphy said he had visited with Denise Griggs from the Sales and Use Tax Commission regarding the fluctuation of oil and gas exploration sales tax receipts. She explained there was an increase when the producers start drilling. We receive tax on the rental of the actual drilling rig, pipe, sand, mud, tools, etc. that they consume. When there is no drilling activity, there is nothing much to tax, only small things such as maintenance or repairs. He hoped this would answer questions board members had last month. Recovery through audits were down 31% for the year.

In his financial update for the month ending February 2019, Mr. Murphy communicated that the Total Fund Balance was down \$4.5 million compared to February 2018.

He was pleased to share the Health Care Fund was up \$99,000 for the month ending February 2019. The fund is up \$158,000 for the first two months of the year.

James Payton, New Construction Coordinator, gave the following construction update:

1. Construction had accelerated at the STEM Center with recent nice weather conditions. The roof was finally complete. Exterior brickwork should be complete by the end of the week. Concentration would be focused on the interior now.
2. Construction of the new carline road at CES had all but halted due to the

recent weather conditions. Police Jury employees are now back working; hopefully the road will be complete by the end of the school year. The new road would enhance the safety conditions at CES. He reminded the board that this was a joint project between the police jury and the school board.

Following a month of studying one policy revision, Lisa Bastion, Assistant Superintendent/ Chief Academic Officer, asked board members to approve the proposed changes to the policy manual.

Upon a motion by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board unanimously voted to approve revisions to *Sexual Harassment* – GAEEA.

Mr. Murphy explained that the Industrial Tax Exemption #20180414-ITE-\$6,208,490, for South Alexander Development III, LLC was approved by the Louisiana Economic Development Board on February 27, 2019. Kristi Lumpkin, with the City of Ruston, explained the economic development program had been in existence for a while, but in 2016, the governor changed the rules and gave local government bodies more of a voice. Now when these projects are developed the local bodies can vote to approve the 80% abatement of property taxes for the projects. If approved, it would be for an initial five years, subject to a five-year extension. From day one, the local entities will receive 20% of the property taxes. The project brought before the board is a solar farm to be located on 50 acres inside the Village of Simsboro. Whereas this creates economic activity in Lincoln Parish, Mr. Murphy recommended approval.

Upon a motion by Ms. Best, seconded by Dr. Gullatt, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the Industrial Exemption Application #20180414-ITE-\$6,208,490.

Because of the vital role of school bus operators, lunchroom workers, custodians, secretaries, clerical personnel, teacher aides, bus aides, maintenance workers, paraprofessionals, and

others in the efficient operation of the school system, Ricky Edmiston, Supervisor of Auxiliary Services, recommended that the Board adopt a Resolution designating April 23-26, 2019, as Support Personnel Week. Mr. Edmiston read the resolution in full.

Upon a motion by Ms. Anders, seconded by Ms. Abraham, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the following:

*RESOLUTION*

*That the Lincoln Parish School Board designate the week of April 23-26, 2019, as Support Personnel Week in Lincoln Parish and copies of this Resolution be sent to each school in Lincoln Parish and also made a part of the official minutes of the Lincoln Parish School Board.*

The Board was reminded by Mr. Murphy that each year schools are allocated monies from the 1979 sales tax fund to purchase instructional supplies. This allocation is based upon the student enrollment as of October 1, 2018. He proposed the same per pupil allocations from the previous year but noted the total amount was slightly lower than last year because of a decrease in students. The \$72,179.50 distribution Mr. Murphy recommended was as follows:

Art	PK-12	-	\$1.75 per student
Physical Education	PK-12	-	\$1.75 per student
Library Supplies	PK-5	-	\$1.25 per student
	6-12	-	\$1.75 per student
Music	PK-5	-	\$1.25 per student
	6-12	-	\$1.75 per student
Magazines & Newspapers	PK-6	-	\$3.00 per student
	7-12	-	\$3.25 per student
Science	PK-6	-	\$1.50 per student
	7-8	-	\$3.00 per student
	9-12	-	\$4.50 per student

Upon a motion by Ms. Abraham, seconded by Mr. Smith, the Board unanimously

voted to approve the distribution of \$72,179.50 from 1979 sales tax monies for instructional supply money for the 2019-2020 school year as mentioned above.

In order to comply with state law, Mr. Edmiston voiced the annual request for permission to advertise for bids on materials and supplies for schools with an aggregate cost of \$30,000 or more.

Upon a motion by Mr. Barmore, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to grant permission to advertise for bids for the purchase of duplicating paper, Scott paper towels, dust mop rentals, and gasoline and diesel for the 2019-2020 school year.

Change order #1 for the STEM Center project was presented by Mr. Payton. If approved, the change order would add \$32,098 to the contract price and 32 days to the contract time. Four items were included on the change order. They were as follows:

1. Change storefront framing system to an Armotex Level 3 Bullet Resist System;
2. Delete power to 25 camera locations. Add conduit and boxes for the original 25 camera locations and add conduit and boxes for 8 additional camera locations;
3. Add 11 rain days and 21 additional workdays; and
4. Use the contingency allowance credit (\$20,000).

Upon a motion by Dr. Gullatt, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board unanimously voted to approve change order #1 for the STEM Building with items #1, #2, #3, and #4 adding \$32,098 to the contract price and 32 days to the contract time.

Superintendent Milstead reminded the board of recent months of financial updates showing a deficit and the trend in sales tax receipts continuing to decrease. In an honest attempt to minimize the district's expenses, the administration has proposed an incentive plan that several other districts have used as a cost saving measure. If approved, a one-time \$10,000 salary incentive

would be offered for as many as ten employees. He turned the floor over to Ms. Bastion for her to explain the specifics.

Ms. Bastion explained that the administration had worked with the auxiliary departments to trim the budget. They have now met with all the principals in the district regarding the reduction in staff as a savings. After meeting with the principals, about 30 employees were identified who had completed three years of DROP or will have completed it by the end of the summer. Through attrition, if the incentive was accepted, we could save over \$200,000 with just four employees. A maximum incentive expenditure of \$100,000, for 10 employees, was proposed. If more than 10 employees meeting this criterion decide for this option, those leaving through attrition and others that have the largest impact to the budget would be given first consideration.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to approve a one-time salary-incentive plan as a cost-cutting measure for the school system.

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

1. Shared the quarterly report from the Adopt-a School program had been placed in the board members' portfolios.
2. Communicated that a form requesting information for the auditors had also been placed in the board members' portfolios.
3. Noted that Tier 3 Personal Financial Disclosure Statements were included in packets. They are due May 15.
4. Reminded board members that a Superintendent's Evaluation document was sent to them electronically. He asked them to complete and return to Mrs. McCormack.
5. Shared that he is working on a CEA with the City of Ruston regarding the RHS

baseball field. The city took control over the baseball field from the Lincoln Foundation; at that point, RHS and LPSB had no voice in the use of the field. He is confident they can work together for a mutual agreement. He is also working on a CEA with the city regarding the use of the softball fields and tennis courts at the new sports complex in exchange for the Lincoln Center. This will be a positive for the Head Start program and the city.

6. Invited all board members to the Celebration of Champions, which would be held prior to the May 7 board meeting. It would be held at the Ruston Civic Center from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
7. Voiced that the Job Fair would be held April 23, from 4:30 – 7:00 p.m., at the Lincoln Parish Library Event Center.

After comments from several board members, upon a motion by Ms. Best, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

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Mike Milstead, Secretary

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Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President