

LINCOLN PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
Ruston, Louisiana

REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, May 7, 2019 6:00 p.m.

The Lincoln Parish School Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 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. David Ferguson, Dr. David Gullatt, Mr. Danny Hancock, Ms. Lynda Henderson, Mr. George Mack, Jr., Mr. Joe Mitcham, Mr. Hunter Smith, and Ms. Susan Wiley.

No board member was absent.

President Joe Mitcham called the meeting to order and welcomed visitors, and Mr. Barmore gave the invocation. Mr. Hancock 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 Dr. Gullatt, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on April 2, 2019, as printed.

Cathi Cox-Boniol, Lincoln ACHIEVE Coordinator, felt privileged and honored to inform the Board that three Ruston High School seniors had been selected as National Merit Finalists. Michael Bishop, Davis Glen Ellis, and David Griffin were the only three students throughout all schools in Lincoln Parish announced as one of the approximately 16,000 semifinalists in the 64th annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

She summarized the steps the students had taken prior to making it to this level and explained that they represent less than 1% of all seniors in the United States. Ms. Cox-Boniol provided background information on each young man and presented a plaque to all three in recognition of their outstanding achievement. In conclusion, she announced that all three had advanced to the Scholar Level.

President Mitcham, Superintendent Mike Milstead, and several board members applauded the students and their achievements.

Ms. Cox-Boniol then recognized and presented a plaque to State Semi-Finalist Principal of the Year, Rusty Farrar. He has been Lincoln Parish Principal of the Year for two consecutive years. She summarized background information on the principal of Simsboro School and shared what steps he had taken to reach that level of state competition. She said Principal Farrar believes that success starts with people, not programs, and encourages his staff to strive for perfection and settle for only excellence.

Mr. Farrar said he was humbled to be recognized for doing his job and that he is part of a great team at Simsboro made up of faculty, staff, students, and the community. He thanked several key staff members and stated he was proud to represent Simsboro School and Lincoln Parish in the Principal of the Year competition.

In her Personnel Report, Dr. Doris Lewis, Director of Human Resources, shared the following information:

1. Retirement of the following effective May 25, 2019, unless otherwise stated:

Teresa Shrell, teacher at Choudrant Elementary;

Dr. Sheri Robken, Assistant Principal at I.A. Lewis, effective June 11, 2019;

Shannon Perot, Curriculum Strategist at Ruston Elementary, effective June 4, 2019;

Pamela Owen, teacher at Ruston Elementary; and

Lora Hammons, Librarian/Media Specialist at Ruston High School.

2. Resignation of the following effective May 25, 2019, unless otherwise stated:

Amy Colvin, teacher at Cypress Springs;

Sarah Hudson, teacher at Cypress Springs;

Stacy Allbritton, French teacher at LPECC;

Susan Newman, teacher at Ruston Elementary;

Lana Hendrix, social studies teacher at Ruston Junior High;

Rebecca Strickler, art teacher at Ruston Junior High, effective April 29, 2019;

Savannah Bearden, teacher at Simsboro School;

Karla Doss, teacher at Simsboro School; and

Lauren Mauer, ELA teacher at Simsboro School.

3. Employment of Christopher Bond, head basketball coach at Ruston High School, effective May 1, 2019, replacing Adrian Hester who transferred.

4. Retirement of the following effective May 24, 2019, unless otherwise stated:

Willie Millsap, field technician at School Food Services office, effective June 29, 2019;

Annette Davis, cafeteria technician at LPECC;

Glenda Samuel, cafeteria technician at Ruston Elementary; and

Karen Blade, cafeteria technician at Simsboro School.

5. Resignation of the following effective May 24, 2019, unless otherwise stated:

Gloria Gates, cafeteria technician at Choudrant High;

Sarah Crane, cafeteria technician at Cypress Springs; and

Tammy Brazzel, cafeteria technician at Cypress Springs, effective April 11, 2019.

6. Retirement of Tyrone Jordan, maintenance at Central Office, effective June 29, 2019.

7. Resignation of the following:

Tracey Nelson, custodian at Cypress Springs, effective May 24, 2019; and

Brenda Washington, custodian at Ruston Junior High, effective May 31, 2019.

Dr. Lewis reported the Job Fair was held April 23 at the Lincoln Parish Library and was very well attended.

George Murphy, Business Manager, reported sales taxes collected year-to-date for the period ending April 30, 2019, were down \$1.7 million. Recoveries through audits were also down.

Moving on to the financial statement for March 2019, Mr. Murphy said the total fund balance was down \$1.6 million compared to February and down \$4.5 million compared to March 2018.

In his Health Care Fund report, Mr. Murphy stated the fund is down \$524,000 for the month of March and down \$365,000 year-to-date. A meeting with the Health Care

broker was planned for later this month to discuss further recommendations that may have to be made going forward.

James Payton, New Construction Coordinator, narrated several pictures in his construction update.

1. Weather continued to be a problem at the STEM Center site. Very little outside work was left to do; interior work was taking place now. The utilities project was almost complete, including a detention pond and dam that would help alleviate water run-off in the future. A new sewer line was also part of this project.
2. Road construction at Choudrant Elementary should be complete soon.

Superintendent Milstead voiced that School Board office personnel had been in negotiations with FM Global, our property insurance carrier, for 19 months related to the old Head Start building fire. Most recently, LPSB was told insurance money derived from this loss could only be used with certain built-in policy restrictions (based on updated codes but only for new construction). We have now reached an agreement with the insurance carrier that removes all policy restrictions and timelines if we are willing to accept the negotiated amount of \$4.1 million. He recommended the Board accept this offer.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to accept the negotiated amount of \$4.1 million with FM Global as a final settlement related to the Head Start building fire.

Mr. Milstead explained the State of Louisiana was looking at the possibility of giving certificated personnel a \$1,000 pay raise and non-certificated personnel a \$500 pay raise. BESE had voted unanimously and sent to the state legislature their support of the resolution of the pay raises and in addition an increase of per pupil MFP funding by 1.375%.

MFP dollars, the state's contribution to our school district, are monies that we receive from the State of Louisiana in order to make it possible to run our school system. Lincoln Parish School Board and other school boards throughout the state of Louisiana had seen virtually no MFP increases from the state in nine of the last ten years. The purpose of this resolution was to send a message to the Governor and state legislators that state superintendents and school districts support these changes. He read the Resolution in full, which would be signed by the entire Board and forwarded to Governor John Bel Edwards and local legislators.

Upon a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Mr. Ferguson, the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution of support for the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education proposal of a \$1,000 pay raise for certificated employees and a \$500 pay raise for non-certificated employees and a 1.375% raise in MFP funding.

President Mitcham announced that this was the time specified for a public hearing and for public comments regarding the adoption of a resolution levying ad valorem tax millages for 2019. He announced the Board would now go into public hearing and turned the floor over to George Murphy.

Mr. Murphy explained that it was time for the annual adoption of ad valorem tax millages for 2019. This year there were three changes in renewals and three changes in amounts that would be assessed for the capital amounts on Ruston, Simsboro, and Choudrant. All the other millages remain the same as 2018. He asked if the Board or the public had any comments or questions. Hearing none, 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 the Board to vote regarding the matter.

Upon a motion by Dr. Gullatt, seconded by Ms. Henderson, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to adopt the resolution to levy millages for 2019 as follows:

Resolution

<i>Constitutional Tax (La. Const. Art. VII, Sect. 13)</i>	<i>3.91 mills</i>
<i>Special Maintenance & Operation</i>	<i>4.94 mills</i>
<i>Special Repair & Equipment</i>	<i>4.94 mills</i>
<i>Parish wide Maintenance & Operation</i>	<i>9.47 mills</i>
<i>Parish wide Maintenance & 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>2.99 mills</i>
<i>Choudrant School District #6</i>	<i>2.64 mills</i>
<i>General Obligation Bonds Ruston SD #1</i>	<i>11.25 mills</i>
<i>General Obligation Bonds Simsboro SD #3</i>	<i>7.00 mills</i>
<i>General Obligation Bonds Choudrant SD #6</i>	<i>16.00 mills</i>

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

Voting AGAINST the motion: None.

Abstained: None.

Absent and not voting: None.

Most of the work on the STEM utilities project was complete except the list of items to be corrected in accordance with the final punch list. Mr. Payton recommended that Substantial Completion documents be executed. Substantial Completion means the owner can use the utilities and the owner becomes responsible for insurance.

Upon a motion by Ms. Wiley, seconded by Mr. Hancock, the Board

unanimously voted to grant permission and authorize the superintendent, his staff, and the engineer to execute the Substantial Completion documents for utility construction at the STEM Center.

Superintendent Milstead shared that considering the damage across the city from the April 25 tornado, LPSB schools fared very well overall. If not for utilities disrupted and trees down, all twelve school sites could have been open the next day. We were very fortunate as a parish; however, Ruston High School sustained damage primarily at the athletic facilities and Cypress Springs Elementary had minimal damage. The RHS auditorium sustained slight damage to the roof. The reconstruction process is time constraining because there is a home football game at RHS on September 19, 2019. He and Mr. Payton narrated several pictures from both school sites. In order to streamline the bid process and expedite reconstruction, Mr. Milstead recommended the Board give him, the Board President, and Chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee permission to advertise for and accept bids on behalf of the Board for the reconstruction associated with the tornado damage.

After a motion by Mr. Anders, seconded by Ms. Abrahm, the Board unanimously voted to approve the above recommendation.

Mr. Milstead voiced that a Capital Outlay plan had been in existence for several years. The next item discussed to bring before the Board was a Pre-K center at Choudrant Elementary. With the approval of the \$4.1 million insurance settlement, his recommendation was to begin the bidding process for the Choudrant Elementary project. The approximate cost for the Pre-K center was \$1.1 million.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hancock, seconded by Ms. Best, the Board unanimously voted to give permission to bid for the Choudrant Elementary Pre-K classrooms.

Mr. Payton communicated that Ruston High School had older weight lifting equipment that was no longer needed. He asked permission to declare the items as surplus.

After a motion by Ms. Henderson, seconded by Mr. Barmore, the Board unanimously voted to declare the above-mentioned item as surplus and dispose of them in accordance with state law and local policies.

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

1. Recognition of retirees would again be held at their schools or locations in lieu of a reception in the lobby of the Central Office. This seems to have worked well in the past, and he believes retirees appreciate this celebration. Board members were invited to attend.
2. High school graduations begin in two weeks with the first one, Choudrant, on Monday (20th), followed by Ruston High's on Tuesday (21st), and finally Simsboro's on Thursday (23rd). Board members were encouraged to attend. A list of locations and times had been placed in board members' portfolios.
2. He, Ms. Bastion, and Ricky Durrett, Secondary Supervisor, had been involved in several telephone conversations with State Superintendent of Education John White and President Dennis Epps of Delta Community College. They are working on a program that would allow students to be certified in certain areas when they graduate from high school. After that certification is complete, the state would pay for them to continue their education at Delta Community College. The summer after graduation they would be paid \$1,000 per month to work for local businesses in their chosen career path. Local businesses that have been mentioned are Graphics Packaging, Ochsner Hospital, and IBM. The goal is for students to be hired by these partner employers.
4. The Dubach Art Show would be Thursday, May 9, from 4:00-6:00. He encouraged board members to attend, reminding them that art teacher

Lauren Dixon is the Louisiana Art Teacher of the Year. It is always a great show and Ms. Dixon does a super job with the students.

After comments from several board members, upon a motion by Ms. Best, the meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Mike Milstead, Secretary

Joe E. Mitcham, Jr., President