

State of Louisiana

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JIMMY D. LONG SR. LOUISIANA SCHOOL FOR MATH, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

December 4, 2023

The Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts met on Monday December 4, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Mrs. Sharon Gahagan welcomed members and guests and invited Diamond Smith, Mackenzie LaCombe and Kaylyn Coughlin, LSMSA students from the School's Athletic Council, to speak with members about the Radio M.A.S.H. Toy Drive. Mrs. Gahagan called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. Mrs. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Roll was called, and quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan (Chair)
Ms. Leanne Broussard
Mr. Joseph E. "Jed" Cain
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (Vice Chair)
Mr. Kirby Hopkins
William "Bill" Luster, MD
Ms. Meredith McGovern
Dr. Kyle Stephens
Dr. Larry Tremblay
Dr. Arthur S. Williams
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent

Representative Beryl Amedee
Mr. Preston Castille
Mr. David Claxton
Ms. Lisa DeJean
Mr. Jared Dunahoe
Dr. Greg Handel
Senator Katrina Jackson
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson
Ms. Denise Karamales
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr.
Ms. Tana Luther
Senator Beth Mizell
Representative Charles Owens
Ms. Regina Pierce

Guests Present

Attorney Ken Sills
Dr. Bill Ebarb, LSMSA CFO, Special Assistant to the Executive Director for Special Projects
Dr. Jason Anderson, Director of Academic Affairs
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Director of Enrollment Management & Institutional Research
Ms. Angela Couvillion, Registrar and Chief Articulation Officer
Ms. Ro Slutsky, Director of Student Support Services
Ms. Christie Price, Dean of Students
Ms. Randi Washington, Director of the Living Community
Ms. Erin King, Counselor
Ms. Corey Poole, LSMSA External Affairs
LSMSA Student Athletes Diamond Smith / Kaylyn Coughlin / Mackenzie Lacombe

AGENDA ITEM 1: APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2023, BOARD MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the September 11, 2023, minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Cain, and unanimously passed, the minutes of the September 11, 2023, meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the November 7, 2023, Executive Committee minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. McGovern, seconded by Dr. Tremblay, and unanimously passed, the minutes of the November 7, 2023, Executive Committee meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Gahagan reported that she had no requests for comment.

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF 2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The proposed calendar for the 2024-2025 school year indicates start and stop dates, breaks, significant grading periods, and special events like matriculation and commencement.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Gentry, seconded by Dr. Stephens, and unanimously passed, the 2024-2025 School Calendar was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF CREDENTIALS OF NEW FACULTY (T. FADIPE – SCIENCES)

Dr. Temitope Fadipe is a mid-year hire who joins LSMSA science department to teach biology. She has a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and a doctorate in Molecular Biology from the University of Lagos in Nigeria.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Tremblay, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the credentials of new faculty.

AGENDA ITEM 6: APPROVAL OF LSMSA STUDENT DEVICE POLICY

Due to an uptick in students needing to check out laptops and other equipment, and using technology that is not compatible with School's current operating systems, LSMSA now offers a one-to-one program for technology that includes laptops and other technological devices. With that program comes a policy to hold parents and students accountable for these devices, including laptops, iPads, and MACs. This policy covers all incidentals in case equipment is misused, damaged, lost, or misplaced.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Dr. Tremblay, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the LSMSA Student Device Policy.

AGENDA ITEM 7: RATIFICATION OF FOUNDATION FACULTY/STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 2023 BOARD MEETING

Six (6) employees received reimbursement from the Foundation for matters primarily related to conference registrations, theatre set design, and expenses for the 40th Anniversary events and promotion.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Gentry, seconded by Dr. Luster, and unanimously passed, the Board ratified the Foundation's faculty/staff reimbursements paid since the September 2023 Board meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 8: RATIFICATION OF AGENDA ITEMS APPROVED IN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, NOVEMBER 7, 2023

The following agenda items were approved by Executive Committee in November and require ratification by the full Board at its quarterly meeting:

- 1. Discussion and approval of the Distribution Schedule for Stipends Granted under Act 447 of the 2023 Regular Session (and direction of LSMSA Administration to distribute such stipends as specified in said Schedule as soon as practicable.*
- 2. Discussion and Approval of LSMSA Faculty Salary Index to be used in determining the salaries and increases of the faculty members, counselors, and related personnel at LSMSA.*
- 3. Discussion and Approval to determine that every instructor/teacher at LSMSA meets said Board's standards as a "highly effective teacher" and shall be recognized and compensated on that basis.*

Upon motion duly made by Ms. McGovern, seconded by Dr. Stephens, and unanimously passed, the Board ratified agenda items approved in the Executive Committee meeting on November 7, 2023.

AGENDA ITEM 9: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

According to Dr. Horton, the faculty has come back excited, courses are in play, classes are full, and in-person instruction is taking place. The quality of instruction is intact, and it seems the students are reacting and responding more favorably than in the last couple of years. The school year began with 40th Anniversary celebrations that included alumni, current students, faculty, staff, and the community.

Louisiana Public Broadcasting spent a day at LSMSA and featured the School in a show called "Louisiana: The State We Live In." LSMSA also received high Niche ratings for faculty and school ratings nationwide. Dr. Horton indicated that Natchitoches Parish School District continues to elevate its performance, and LSMSA is proud to bring 15-20 Natchitoches Parish students into the school every year.

Dr. Horton explained that LSMSA has a unique Student Concerns committee that meets once a week to review and discuss student(s) concerns and develop individualized ways to work with students, parents, and faculty to address those needs/concerns on an ongoing basis. Dr. Horton further commended the residential life staff, which he feels goes unmentioned and unrecognized so often.

AGENDA ITEM 10: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY

The full report is included as Agenda Item 10, Exhibit 1, and includes activities by Drs. Benner, Key, Lankford, Stephens, and Tichenor; and Coach Spielbauer. Dr. Stephens echoed Dr. Horton in saying that the semester has been successful. Both returners and first-year students, for the most part, have been both positive and upbeat, he said, adding that first-year students are bright, motivated, and fun to teach.

He also thanked the faculty and staff in Academic Affairs who work behind the scenes to make sure everything runs smoothly, and students stay on track academically during the semester and finals week. He added, the degree of collegiality among the faculty is higher than he's noticed in the eight years he's been at LSMSA, and he's proud not just to represent them but to be in their company.

AGENDA ITEM 11: DIVISION REPORTS

- a. CofS – Operations (Dr. Ebarb): Quick glance and review of current and next fiscal year budgets, upcoming projects, and anticipated changes to budget requests for next year. Dr. Ebarb also discussed some changes he's anticipating here at the school, including bringing back some fun dining hall traditions like "Steak Night/Premium Night" and community dinners.
- b. Academic Affairs (Dr. Anderson): He echoed Drs. Horton and Stephens saying this has been a wonderful semester, students are working hard and feel a sense of normalcy. He indicated that 10 students have withdrawn due to academic reasons, medical reasons, and family reasons. Another 5-10 are anticipated to withdraw before the end of the fall semester. The retention rate is on par with past semesters, and he commended faculty, staff, and support services for helping

students cope with academics, wellness, living environment, and more. He also highlighted Sam Ryan, a senior from Sugartown, LA, who has been recognized as LSMSA's 2023-2024 Student of the Year and will compete at the regional level and possibly the state.

- c. Enrollment Management and Institutional Research (E. Shumate): The department has been doing extensive travel and participating in STEM and other conference-style events in Louisiana to bring awareness to potential students and inform them about LSMSA. They also assisted with activities like the McGrath Math Competition and NSU's Robotics Day that are heavily attended by middle and high school students in the state; and will plan to participate in STEM Café events sponsored by LaSTEM in the spring. Enrollment Management is also trying to put together programs with Girl/Boy Scouts, local 4-H groups and others that might help reach potential students.

External Affairs Officer Rebekah Maricelli has moved to Tennessee with her family. Mrs. Poole and Mrs. Shumate will handle those duties until the position is filled.

- d. Student Support Services (R. Slutsky): 85% of the students currently have passing grades at midterms. The counseling department is supported by two (2) full-time counselors, an intern, and a licensed social worker who offer a sundry of guidance and support services to the students. According to LSMSA's College Counseling Center (CCC), 100% of the class of 2024 has applied for higher education to at least one college or university. They've submitted 889 applications to 264 colleges and universities. CCC staff member Mrs. Bonnie Rutledge administered 176 PSAT exams to students this fall! Department admin Mrs. Jackie Jacoby will retire in January. Mrs. Slutsky also recognized counselor Erin King as always going "Above and Beyond" to fight for our students' needs, academically, emotionally, and mentally.
- e. Dean of Students (C. Price): Dean Price reported that 504 accommodation numbers have been on the rise; and at the same time, discipline and student behavior has been much calmer than in prior semesters. Her report includes additional information that is noteworthy currently.
- f. Living Community (R. Washington): All positions for SLAs and RAs will be posted in February; some staff is graduating, and others are moving on to the next chapters of their career journey. Assistant LLC Coordinator Meridith Madison has been working with the Inter Club Council (ICC) and our student organizations to create more opportunities for weekend events for students, which has resulted in over 100 hall and building programs. Student illness has decreased this fall, with fewer than 20 telehealth appointments this year as compared to over 50 during this same period last year. LSMSA is also taking part in a diabetes wellness program for its students, faculty, and staff. The Athletics Department continues to thrive under the direction of Coach Dale Clingerman. Student clubs/organizations raised over \$1,300.00 at Eagle Stock within a span of two (2) hours. LSMSA currently supports more than 50 clubs/organizations, supported by various faculty and staff who donate their time to sponsor these groups each year.
- g. Foundation (A. Landry): There will be a transition in leadership as Ali Landry resigns as Executive Director to pursue another position elsewhere. The search for a replacement has begun, and three (3) candidates have already been identified, with the intent to secure someone in the

position by year's end. She thanked the Board and LSMSA faculty/staff for allowing her the opportunity to work closely with the School over the past several years.

Following Division Reports, Mrs. Gahagan requested a report from Counsel. Mr. Sills updated the Board about two pending lawsuits, both of which have had no change since the last meeting. His office continues to monitor both. If no action is taken for three (3) years, they can have them declared as abandoned. His second update was in regard to Board terms for those appointed by the governor and what happens when a new governor takes office. He also reminded Board members that Ethics reporting forms are due in May.

Mrs. Gahagan then asked to address the Board before adjournment. After 37 years of service to LSMSA's Board of Directors – 26 as Chair -- she announced her resignation, effective immediately. She expressed gratitude and appreciation to those who have helped along the way, including faculty/educators, students and alumni, state legislators, counsel, and all who keep the institution running, especially its Executive Directors. And finally, she said, "To all the members of the Board of Directors since 1983, including each and every one of you who will serve without pay to promote the goals, the aspirations, of LSMSA who have lended a guiding hand to the director, faculty, staff, students, and attendance at meetings, adoptions of politics and procedures, and truly supporting that which is in the best interest of LSMSA."

Citing the Board's bylaws Part 3 Section C, at the next regular meeting of the Board, the chairperson shall be duly elected. Vice Chair (Dr. Gentry) shall serve as Interim Chair until that time.

Mrs. Gahagan will be honored in May along with the School's other retirees, and also at the 2024 Commencement Ceremony in May.

AGENDA ITEM 12: OTHER BUSINESS

The next Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 18, 2024; followed by the June 10 meeting.

There being no further business,

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Tremblay, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,


Dr. Vickie Gentry
Vice-Chair


Steven G. Horton, Ph.D.
Secretary