

State of Louisiana

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

September 28, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts met on Monday September 28, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Prior to calling the meeting to order, Board Chair Sharon Gahagan introduced Natchitoches' mayor, Ronnie Williams Jr., who expressed his gratitude to the Board and faculty, on behalf of the residents of Natchitoches, for the work being done at LSMSA.

Following the Mayor's remarks, Mrs. Gahagan called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Ms. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Mrs. Gahagan welcomed members and guests to the meeting, and again thanked Mayor Williams for stopping in via Zoom.

Roll was called, and a Quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan (Chair)
Mr. Tony Davis (Vice Chair)
Rep. Beryl Amedee (via Zoom)
Dr. Jason C. Anderson
Ms. Leanne M Broussard (via Zoom)
Mr. Raphael Curtis (via Zoom)
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (via Zoom)
Mr. Kirby Hopkins (via Zoom)
Ms. Chanda Johnson (via Zoom)
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson (via Zoom)
Ms. Denise Karamales (via Zoom)
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr. (via Zoom)
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister (via Zoom)
Ms. Martha T. Smiley
Dr. Larry Tremblay (via Zoom)
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent:

Mr. Joseph E. "Jed" Cain
Mr. Jared R. Dunahoe
Senator Beth Mizell
Representative Charles Owens
Mr. Richard Strong
Dr. Arthur S. Williams

Guests Present:

Mayor Ronnie Williams, City of Natchitoches

Mr. Ken Sills, Attorney, Hammonds, Sills Adkins & Guice LLP
Mr. John Allen, LSMSA Chief of Staff
Mr. Mike Sumner, LSMSA Asst. Director of Enrollment Services
Ms. Melissa Losch, Hammonds, Sills Adkins & Guice LLP (via Zoom)
Ms. Ali Landry, LSMSA Foundation Executive Director (via Zoom)
Dr. Kristi Pope-Key, LSMSA Academic Services Director (via Zoom)
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Enrollment & Student Services Director (via Zoom)

A Quorum of Board members being present, the meeting proceeded with business.

AGENDA ITEM 1: APPROVAL OF JUNE 15, 2020, BOARD MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the June 15, 2020, Board minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Tony Davis, seconded by Ms. Martha Smiley, and unanimously passed, the Minutes of the June 15, 2020 meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF JUNE 24, 2020, and JULY 22, 2020, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the June 24, 2020, and July 22, 2020, Executive Committee minutes and requested any additions or corrections. Dr. Tremblay inquired if Agenda Item 5 (Executive Director's Report Regarding Investigative Proceedings Regarding Allegations of Misconduct) would cover further details of these meetings, to which Dr. Horton said yes.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Tony Davis, seconded by Dr. Larry Tremblay, and unanimously passed, the Minutes of the June 24, 2020 and July 22, 2020 Executive Committee meetings stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Gahagan said the Board received 11 public comments. Attorney Ken Sills explained that Legislative Amendment to Act 302 requires these comments be read. One comment was deemed inappropriate and was not read; the other 10 were read by Mrs. Gahagan, truncating items that were redundant/repeated from the longest comment that included additional names in support. These comments are included as **Exhibit A3E1** to these minutes.

Mrs. Gahagan asked if the members/guests had any questions or comments. As there were none, Public Comments were closed.

No Action Required

AGENDA ITEM 4: INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Mrs. Gahagan indicated that these introductions had already been made.

No Action Required

AGENDA ITEM 5: REPORT FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REGARDING INVESTIGATIVE PROCEEDINGS REGARDING ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Jason Anderson that the Board go into Executive Session pursuant to L.R.S. 42:17(A)(2) to discuss the following matters: Executive Director's Report Regarding Investigative Proceeding Regarding Allegations of Misconduct; seconded by Ms. Martha Smiley; Ms. Lucas commenced the required Roll Call Vote (requires 2/3 of the board members present in person or via zoom to authorize the Executive Session):

**Rep. Beryl Amedee, yes
Dr. Jason C. Anderson, yes
Ms. Leanne Broussard, yes
Mr. Raphael Curtis, yes
Mr. Tony Davis, yes
Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan, yes
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry, yes
Mr. Kirby Hopkins, yes
Ms. Chanda Johnson, yes
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson, yes
Ms. Denise Karamales, yes
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr., yes
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister, yes
Ms. Martha Smiley, yes
Dr. Larry Tremblay, yes**

Unanimously passed, the Chair gave permission to proceed, and the Board entered into Executive Session at 2:01 p.m. At the request of the Chair, Attorneys Ken Sills and Melissa Losch were asked to remain in Executive Session. Zoom participants were placed into a ZOOM waiting room, and physical guests in attendance were asked to leave the boardroom.

At the completion of business addressed during Executive Session, the Regular Session resumed at 2:37 p.m. Zoom attendees were brought back in from the electronic waiting room, and guests in attendance were invited to re-enter the boardroom.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan (Chair)
Rep. Beryl Amedee (via Zoom)
Dr. Jason C. Anderson
Ms. Leanne M Broussard
Mr. Raphael Curtis (via Zoom)
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (via Zoom)
Mr. Kirby Hopkins (via Zoom)
Ms. Chanda Johnson (via Zoom)
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson (via Zoom)
Ms. Denise Karamales (via Zoom)
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr. (via Zoom)
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister (via Zoom)
Ms. Martha T. Smiley
Dr. Larry Tremblay (via Zoom)
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent:

Mr. Tony Davis (Vice Chair) – excused himself from the meeting following Executive Session
Mr. Joseph E. “Jed” Cain
Mr. Jared R. Dunahoe
Senator Beth Mizell
Representative Charles Owens
Mr. Richard Strong
Dr. Arthur S. Williams

Guests Present:

Mr. Ken Sills, Attorney, Hammonds, Sills Adkins & Guice LLP
Mr. John Allen, LSMSA Chief of Staff
Mr. Mike Sumner, LSMSA Asst. Director of Enrollment Services
Ms. Melissa Losch, Hammonds, Sills Adkins & Guice LLP (via Zoom)
Ms. Ali Landry, LSMSA Foundation Executive Director (via Zoom)
Dr. Kristi Pope-Key, LSMSA Academic Services Director (via Zoom)
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Enrollment & Student Services Director (via Zoom)

A Quorum of Board members being present, the meeting proceeded with business, with Mrs. Gahagan, presiding.

AGENDA ITEM 6: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

The School was named one of the U.S. Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence. Dr. Horton said that LSMSA was 1 of 10 in Louisiana, and also received Exemplary status, which was only given to 3 schools in Louisiana. According to Dr. Horton, a school can only receive this award once every 5 years, and it’s been about 7 or 8 years since we last received it. He recognized Dr. Key for her persistence in gathering the data during the quarantine and completing the application process. There will be a virtual ceremony in November to receive the certificates, the flag, and all the honors that accompany the recognition. LSMSA also remained in Niche’s Top 1% of the schools in Louisiana and was recognized for having the Top Faculty in Louisiana.

He also gave a recap on the graduation ceremony held in August for the Class of 2020 as well as the School’s decision to offer virtual learning for the fall semester. Dr. Horton explained that the plan is to bring students back to campus for the spring semester, sometime mid-January to allow time for everyone to self-quarantine after Christmas and before returning to the campus.

Dr. Horton also highlighted several ways that the School was helping the community. The School provided housing in Caddo Hall to several linemen following Hurricane Laura, and also the School coordinated with the Louisiana National Guard to use the drive area outside of the gym as a drive-thru testing site for COVID for the community. He further commended his faculty for their efforts during this time and appreciates that they are remaining focused.

Additionally, Dr. Horton provided an update on the residence hall that is within a couple months of completion .It will be ready for an August 2021 move-in.

No Action Required

AGENDA ITEM 7: APPROVAL OF PROPOSED FUNDING FORMULA FOR FY22

Mr. Allen explained that the funding formula is required by state statute. The School's two main sources of funding are the general fund and the MFP, which is usually 30-35% of the total budget. The funding formula is used to fill the gaps where the School does not have financial support. MFP is based on a February 1st count and an October 1st count.

According to Mr. Allen, the School's goal is to receive \$26,000 per student. In order to educate an 18% increase in enrollment, the school must request an additional \$917,000 from the state general fund to balance the budget. The School will also ask for cost of living adjustments on an annual basis, which usually is approximately \$225,000; deferred maintenance totals approximately \$435,000; and acquisitions, which includes technology and textbooks, is well over \$200,000. The \$6,015,000 shown in the attachment represents the absolute minimum the School will request.

Motion was duly made by Ms. Martha Smiley, and seconded by Dr. Jason Anderson ...

Rep. Amadee asked Mr. Allen for clarification before the vote regarding the percentages presented of 1.5% and the 18%. He explained that the 1.5% is the decrease from 330 to 305 in enrollment. The 18% is the increase from the 305 to 360 -- the Feb 2021 count to the Oct 2021 count.

Mrs. Gahagan reminded the Board that a motion was on the floor, and called for a vote.

... Unanimously passed, the Board approved the proposed Funding Formula for FY22.

AGENDA ITEM 8: APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET FOR FY21

Mr. Allen explained that when the legislature presents the budget in January and February, it is based on the operating budget as of December. The School's rate last year was \$3.127 million. Enrollment was good last year, so LSMSA received a higher MFP amount, which changed the I.E.T. line item; so the actual amount received was \$3.27 million. Mr. Allen further explained the other items on the attachment line by line, indicating where the School can expect increases and cuts and finished by saying the budget compared to last year is a little less this year.

Last, are the required fees and student activity fees. LSMSA did not charge the required fees for the fall. We will charge those fees for the spring, the majority of which is room and board. All labs are virtual, and The Foundation purchased the virtual lab software this year so LSMSA will not charge any science lab fees.

Rep. Amadee asked for clarification regarding the food service savings.

Upon motion duly made by Rep. Beryl Amadee, seconded by Dr. Jason Anderson, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the Budget for FY21.

AGENDA ITEM 9: APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF EEF FUNDS FOR FY21

Mr. Allen explained that LSMSA receives part of the Education Excellence Fund, which is part of the Millennium Fund, which is from the tobacco settlement of the late '90s. The Board approves use of these funds, based on the needs presented by the School's administration. This year's proposal includes \$70k for instructor and residential life personnel, \$20k for education supplies, and \$40k in educational development for employees -- faculty and staff -- for enrichment and furthering their education.

If the Board approves use of this \$130k, the request will go to the DOE. As of right now, Mr. Allen said that the School has \$825,000 with the Treasury. As part of the Governor's mid-year deficit plan, they will take 5% of the School's EEF to cover expenses for the deficit.

Motion was duly made by Ms. Marion "Suzy" Johnson, and seconded by Dr. Jason Anderson ...

Dr. Tremblay asked what happens if funds don't get cut and the School doesn't need to use the funds for education supplies to offset cost, will the money revert back to the Trust fund? Mr. Allen explained that, yes, it goes back into LSMSA's portion of the Trust fund but doesn't get absorbed into the larger fund; thus, the School will have the ability to use it the following year.

Ms. Gahagan reminded the Board that a motion was on the floor, and called for a vote.

... Unanimously passed; the Board approved the use of EEF Funds for FY21

AGENDA ITEM 10: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY (EXHIBIT A10E1)

Dr. Jason Anderson presented faculty accomplishments outlined in **Exhibit A10E1** achieved by Mr. Randy Key, Dr. Allison Landry, Dr. Kelly Lankford, Dr. John Littlejohn, and Dr. Morris Tichenor. He added that the faculty fully supports the decision made by the Board and Dr. Horton to go virtual for Fall 2020. He also took a few minutes to brief the board on some of the challenges faced by the faculty this semester.

Ms. Gahagan told Dr. Anderson to please express the Board's appreciation to the faculty.

No Action Required

AGENDA ITEM 11: REPORT FROM THE I.D.E.A. COUNCIL (EXHIBIT A11E1)

As chairman of the IDEA Council, Dr. Jason Anderson presented the attachment that provided an update from the Council including its statement of purpose and biographies of the Council members. Every member of the Council is a graduate of LSMSA.

The Council narrowed its scope into three primary goals and objectives for this school year. The formation and distribution of a climate survey overwhelmingly was first. The Council also will undertake a thorough policy review of the student and faculty handbooks. Lastly, the implementation of the Dialogue on Race Louisiana Series, founded by Maxinne Crump and seen as an educational tool, is being reviewed by the Council.

Mrs. Gahagan agreed that the Council has chosen an exceptional, impressive group of individuals.

No Action Required

AGENDA ITEM 12: DIVISION REPORTS (EXHIBITS A12E1-4)

Mr. Allen (Chief of Staff/Operations **Exhibit A12E1**) highlighted the Table of Organization and Other Stats, which highlights the breakout in faculty positions, staff positions, administration, classified versus unclassified, breakout by gender/race/ethnicity, and particularly the faculty positions that are open/vacant. Currently there are open positions in biology, chemistry, English, math and history, which are significant because they touch all departments and are reflective of the current situation in terms of

the pandemic and last-minute retirements, etc. The staff positions that are open include a school nurse (LPN), and SLA positions in both residential facilities.

Dr. Key (Academic Services **Exhibit A12E2**) offered her appreciation to Jennifer Baird with the LDOE who helped with the nomination for Blue Ribbon and was vital in Dr. Key's ability to gather data and understand what was going on with the application.

Dr. Key encouraged those Board members who may have questions regarding the Academic format, classes, graduation, all the uncertain aspects of the kids, the parents, the faculty and staff, to please give her a call or send an email to discuss in more depth.

Ms. Shumate (Enrollment and Student Services **Exhibit A12E3**) said her office is really excited about the upcoming virtual recruiting planned for the semester. Virtual information meetings, mail, email and more is being used aggressively to spread the word about LSMSA. She said they plan to do a series of webinars, a series of virtual Question & Answer sessions, a virtual Exploration Day and more. She added that Mike Sumner has been working really hard on a new video series called LSMSA in 5 Minutes or Less, and those are going to appear on the School's website in the next weeks.

Ms. Landry (LSMSA Foundation **Exhibit A12E4**) announced that the LSMSA Foundation ended the previous fiscal year 113% ahead of its fundraising goal and is looking forward to another successful year ahead as it continues to identify ways to help support students and their families during these incredibly challenging times.

No Action Required

AGENDA ITEM 13: OTHER BUSINESS / TENTATIVE DATES FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

Mrs. Gahagan thanked everyone who participated in today's meeting.

Dr. Tremblay inquired if there are any next steps regarding the Public Comments and whether there would be a group response to them. Mrs. Gahagan said that the Board acknowledged the requests that were made and read them. Beyond that, the Board was not required to take any further action .

No Action Required

There being no further business,

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Jason Anderson, seconded by Ms. Martha Smiley, and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,


Steven G. Horton, PhD.
Secretary


Sharon T. Gahagan, EdS.
Chair