

State of Louisiana

MINUTES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

March 21, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts met on Monday March 21, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Mrs. Sharon Gahagan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Mrs. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Mrs. Gahagan welcomed members and guests to the meeting, including new Board member Ms. Tana Luther, and LSMSA Senior Olutunmike “Tum-Tum” Adeleye, who is one of five finalists for Louisiana’s Student of the Year and was awarded a Legislative Scholarship to attend Tulane University in the fall. Roll was called, and Quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Mrs. Sharon T. Gahagan (Chair)
Dr. Jason C. Anderson
Ms. Leanne Broussard
Mr. Jared Dunahoe
Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (Vice Chair)
Ms. Marian “Suzy” Johnson
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr.
William “Bill” Luster, MD
Ms. Tana Luther
Dr. Larry Tremblay
Dr. Arthur S. Williams
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent

Representative Beryl Amedee
Mr. Joseph E. “Jed” Cain
Mr. Preston Castille
Ms. Lisa DeJean
Mr. Kirby Hopkins
Senator Katrina Jackson
Mr. Sheldon Jones
Ms. Denise Karamales
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister
Ms. Meredith McGovern

Senator Beth Mizell
Representative Charles Owens
Ms. Regina Pierce

Guests Present

Dr. Grant Eloi (on behalf of Mr. Sheldon Jones)
Attorney Ken Sills, LSMSA Counsel
Mr. John Allen, LSMSA Chief of Staff
Dr. Kristy Pope-Key, LSMSA Director of Academic Services
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Director of Enrollment and Student Services
Ms. Ali Landry, LSMSA Foundation Executive Director
Ms. Rebekah Maricelli, LSMSA External Affairs
Miss Tum-Tum Adeleye

AGENDA ITEM 1: APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2021, BOARD MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the Dec. 6, 2021, Board minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Jared Dunahoe, seconded by Dr. Art Williams, and unanimously passed, the minutes of the Dec. 6, 2021, meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 2: CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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

AGENDA ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF NEW COURSES OFFERED

Dr. Kristi Key explained that the collection of proposals presented is the result of a full curriculum review and a reflection of new faculty hires who have been at LSMSA for at least a year and are ready to launch their own versions of elective courses they want to teach. A number of these new courses also reflect the revival of the Junior Classical League and classical studies program.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Vickie Gentry, seconded by Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson, and unanimously passed, the proposed new courses were approved.

AGENDA ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF FOUNDATION FACULTY/STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS SINCE DECEMBER 2021 BOARD MEETING

Dr. Horton identified the expenditures that were approved by him for payment by the Foundation since December 2021. Reimbursements were made to two faculty/staff members, Angela Couvillion and Dr. Morris Tichenor.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Jason Anderson, seconded by Dr. Bill Luster, and unanimously passed, the reimbursements paid to faculty/staff members by the Foundation were approved.

AGENDA ITEM #5: APPROVAL OF 2022-2023 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Dr. Key explained that the calendar is similar to prior years and strives to achieve a balance between semesters to ensure breaks are incorporated in a timely fashion. LSMSA tries to align its calendar as much as possible with NSU, but Spring Break and semester end dates often vary slightly.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the proposed 2022-2023 School Calendar was approved.

AGENDA ITEM #6: APPROVAL OF STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES FOR 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

Mr. John Allen explained that the same basic fees are being carried forward from the prior year, including the new \$45 laundry service fee. The total for sophomores and juniors is \$210 and includes student life programming, publications, PSAT registration and laundry service. Seniors have an additional \$60 graduation fee that includes cap and gown and diploma cover. These funds are maintained with the non-treasury account through the Bank of Montgomery.

Dr. Williams asked if there have been any changes in the state mandated fees, to which Mr. Allen replied no, but indicated he plans to do an analysis of those fees to present to the Board next fiscal year. Fees have not increased in several years; however, food service fees continue to rise, so it's time to reevaluate those fees. Of the \$1200 now charged, \$1000 is for food, and the rest includes computer fees, lab fees, and room use fees.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Larry Tremblay, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the 2022-23 Student Activity Fees were approved.

AGENDA ITEM #7: UPDATE ON LSMSA FY23 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Mr. Allen explained that LSMSA's budget is independent from the Department of Education and treated as a line item in the state budget. The Board approves the budget requests, which are then presented to the legislature. In November, the requests included cost of living adjustments, promotions, deferred maintenance, textbooks, and money for IT equipment, amounting to a 12.7% increase, or \$1, 078,000. LSMSA is already receiving ESSER money, which places the school in position right now to fund investments in infrastructure, despite not receiving any funds for textbooks. After the legislative sessions end June 6, a better understanding of approved funds will be available. Dr. Luster asked what is the investment per student, to which Mr. Allen replied that it's roughly \$25,000 per student.

State surplus for this year will pay debts, and another portion will go into the rainy-day fund and capital outlet projects by the state. Regarding funds for acquisitions like textbooks, LSMSA has an exact list to follow for those funds. The school also experiences cuts each year for attrition, despite not losing personnel.

Dr. Williams asked if LSMSA has considered using online textbooks. Dr. Key indicated that we utilize services through NSU's Watson library to rebind textbooks, but have not seen a grand migration toward online textbooks. Between the business office, the budget management team, and the Foundation, textbooks editions are updated on a rolling schedule between departments.

Mr. Allen also indicated that one of the line items in deferred maintenance included \$50,000 to replace rotting window ledges, but there is a greater priority to replace the flooring in the kitchen, which has been deemed an emergency based on warning from the department of health.

AGENDA ITEM #8: UPDATE ON SCHOOL'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DEAN OF STUDENTS SEARCH

In 2017, LSMSA combined the offices of Admissions and Student Services to form the Office of Enrollment Services. When Jenny Schmidt departed LSMSA last year, the decision was made to reassess

the organizational chart and move some duties from Dr. Key's and Mrs. Emily Shumate's areas to have other Directors share the responsibilities. Two new divisions were created; Support Services, under Mrs. Ro Slutsky now handles academic support, personal counseling, and the college counseling center. The other is the position of Assistant Director of Student Services, which has been returned to a Dean of Students and Chief Student Affairs Officer, to include health services, residential life, student activities, athletics, and recreation. Mrs. Shumate's position was tailored to be the Director of Enrollment Management and Institution Research. Dr. Key's area has been tailored to the Office of Academic Affairs and allows her to focus more on faculty and their professional development, to keep a closer eye on curriculum, and support the instruction of the faculty in the classrooms.

There has been no net change in the number of positions; it remains at 91. Ten applications were received for the Dean of Students position. That was narrowed to seven for committee review, then down to five for Zoom interviews. Of those, three were selected to bring to campus for further interview in April. If selected, the plan is for them to come in June to complete cross-training and begin assimilating to campus for a July 1 start date.

AGENDA ITEM #9: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Horton publicly recognized guest Dr. Grant Eloi as a "model superintendent" who has always been a big supporter of LSMSA and celebrates our students and their accomplishments. He further updated the Board on the journey the school has taken these past two years as it navigated the pandemic. Enrollment is back on an upward projection, recruiting has been modified to incorporate more online and social media outlets, traditions are returning to LSMSA, alumni are returning for reunions and various events, and more.

The Ribbon Cutting ceremony, which has been rescheduled several times, has been set for Friday, May 6 at 10 am. Governor and Mrs. Edwards will be on campus for that hour-long event.

Dr. Horton reiterated the budget support and the favorable impact it will make on much-needed infrastructure decisions this year. The chiller has already been replaced; and LSMSA is currently searching for a minority counselor to hire on a "per-diem" basis to assist with student needs. LSMSA also has been able to overhaul the infrastructure of computers on campus, and the migration process to Microsoft Office 365.

Faculty, staff and students are getting ready to successfully close out the year with senior recognitions, graduation, and other year-end traditions.

Dr. Williams added his appreciation for Coach Dale Clingerman, who runs the athletic department, and his efforts to involve daily activities for all students during this time. Dr. Horton concurred and stressed how important these activities have been for both physical and mental health this year. He also indicated that LSMSA continues to develop outlets within its wellness program in an effort to socialize the students and prevent them from staying alone in their rooms throughout the day.

AGENDA ITEM #10: PROCESS FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For the benefit of new members, Mrs. Gahagan explained that annually there is a formal evaluation of the Executive Director. A committee is appointed in March and final reports are received in June. Last

year, due to the pandemic, the process was suspended. Mrs. Gahagan read from the March 2021 minutes and asked that the Board consider the same this year. It reads as follows:

The school is suspending the evaluation process for the faculty this year, as any evaluations that would be conducted would be invalid due to the numerous fluctuations in processes this year. Mrs. Gahagan requests that the same process for the Executive Director's evaluation be made, and that Dr. Horton receive a satisfactory rating and forgo a normal evaluation for this year. She called on the school's Director of Academic Services, Dr. Key, and the Chief of Staff, Mr. Allen, to offer support for this decision. Dr. Kristi Key explained the justification and reasoning that the department chairs gave to suspend the formal evaluation process of faculty. Following input from department chairs, Dr. Key will write a letter to put on file for every full-time faculty member addressing any concerns and noting any conversations that need to take place in regards to performance, promotions, etc. Dr. Key further expressed that Dr. Horton has been right out front with the faculty in its survive and thrive mode. I believe the faculty and staff would be in support of the process for Dr. Horton as well. Mr. Allen, chief of staff, echoed those sentiments saying we have all done our best whether virtual or on campus to keep things moving. As issues have arisen throughout the year, we have addressed these issues and support not having the usual official evaluation. At that time, Mrs. Gahagan concluded by stating that having a full-blown evaluation of the Executive Director is not applicable here, and the Chair respectfully requests the same process used for faculty evaluations be used for the Executive Director's evaluation this year.

Dr. Key added that the decision not to undergo the full evaluative process for Dr. Horton was met with understanding and appreciation from the faculty, as the chairs reported back to her. They understood what a disruption the last couple years have been for everyone involved and have appreciated Dr. Horton's leadership. She said she would carry forward from the chairs a willingness to hold the current holding pattern of Dr. Horton as well.

Dr. Allen echoed those sentiments and said Dr. Horton has his full support and certainly recognizes the extraordinary landscape that LSMSA is in and the need to adjust in order to accommodate where it's headed.

Mrs. Gahagan clarified that the Board is being asked to approve waiving the establishment of a timeline for the evaluation of the Executive Director. Dr. Horton is required to attain a 'Satisfactory' evaluation, per his contractual agreement.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Dunahoe, motion was on the floor to suspend the evaluation process for the Executive Director for another year.

Dr. Tremblay inquired about cost of living and merit raise, which are tied to the evaluation and whether or not waiving the evaluation would affect it. Mrs. Gahagan clarified that she will be writing a letter for the file indicating that the Board, faculty and staff are in support of waiving the formal process and recommending a "Satisfactory" rating.

The motion on the floor to suspend the evaluation process for the Executive Director for another year was amended by Dr. Williams to include the recommendation of a "Satisfactory" rating.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Dunahoe, and unanimously passed, the Board approved waiving the formal process of evaluation of the Executive Director and recommending a “Satisfactory” rating.

AGENDA ITEM #11: REPORT FROM THE I.D.E.A. COUNCIL

As vice chair of the Council, Dr. Jason Anderson reported that the Council has been meeting just about every month via Zoom, including meeting with students a few times since December. The Council also has been in active conversation with Dr. Horton to discuss student counselors and ways to bring training and individuals from outside the campus to talk with students, faculty and staff about various issues and to bring in initiatives that are important to stakeholders, alumni, current students, faculty and staff, such as the Dialogue on Race Louisiana series.

AGENDA ITEM #12: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY

Dr. Anderson’s report on faculty accomplishments since the last meeting included accomplishments made by Dr. Caleb Ford, Dr. Pamela Francis, Dr. Charlie Jones, Mrs. Lisa Benner, Dr. Al Benner, Mr. Chris King, Mr. Randy Key, and Dr. Morris Tichenor. A complete list of those accomplishments is included in Exhibit A12E1. He concluded by saying that the faculty echoes the sentiments of Dr. Horton, Dr. Key, Mrs. Shumate and Mr. Allen – that it’s been a trying year, but they are glad to be back in the classroom and look forward to moving forward.

AGENDA ITEM #13: DIVISION REPORTS

Mrs. Gahagan reminded the Board members that those reports are in their binder and asked if there were questions for any of the Directors or for the Foundation Executive Director, Ali Landry, regarding the reports. There were none.

AGENDA ITEM 14: OTHER BUSINESS / UPCOMING EVENTS

Attorney Ken Sills indicated that he’s working with LSMSA staff to address issues raised concerning sexual harassment, including additional training and a review of the School’s policy to make sure the language is understandable by students who might be involved. Mrs. Gahagan also guided the Board to review the Agenda for upcoming dates regarding Blue & Gold Week, Senior Recognition Ceremony, and Commencement Exercises in May.

AGENDA ITEM 15: DATE FOR NEXT BOARD MEETING

The date for the next Board Meeting is Monday June 13, 2022, at 1 p.m. in the Boardroom.

There being no further business,

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dunahoe, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Sharon T. Gahagan, Ed.S.
Chair



Steven G. Horton, PhD.
Secretary