

Board Meetings
February 9, 2026
3:15 pm

Members present: Darce` Byrd, Secretary (Governor Appointee/Lafayette Parish); Yasmin Welch (Evangeline Parish); Bambi Polotzola, Vice Chair (St. Landry Parish); Carla Jean Batiste, Chair (St. Martin Parish); Richard Landry (Vermilion Parish); Sarah Clement (Lafayette Parish); Carol Broussard (Iberia Parish)

Members absent: Elizabeth West (Governor Appointee/Evangeline Parish), Quinta Thompson Credeur (Governor Appointee/Lafayette Parish)

Vacant Seats: Acadia Parish

AAHSD staff in attendance: Brad Farmer, Executive Director; Gretchen Sudwischer, Administrative Assistant

Members of the public present: William Harrison, PhD

1. Call to order: 3:20 pm

a. Meeting Objectives

- i. Conduct business per the approved agenda calendar.
- ii. Address any new business as needed.

2. Pledge of Allegiance is led by Carla and recited by all in attendance.

3. Roll call performed by Darce` Byrd, acknowledged a quorum is present.

4. Recognition of Members of the Public / Public Comments – It is noted that Dr. William Harrison was present.

5. Consent Agenda Items:

a. Minutes

- i. **January Regular board meeting** - motion made by Bambi and seconded by Yasmin to accept the January Regular Board meetings as written; motion carried unanimously.

b. Program reports

- i. **BH & DD numbers and stats**, BH and DD numbers and stats were submitted and reviewed by board members. A motion made by Carol and Seconded by Richard to accept the DD numbers as submitted, the motion is carried unanimously.

6. Comments from the Chair

a. Board advocacy reports:

- i. Yasmin commented that the nurses in Evangeline Parish who are referring to local clinics under AAHSD are pleased with the services. It was reported that the doctor in St. Landry Parish is doing a wonderful job, using a holistic approach to treat clients.
- ii. Brad noted the vacant Acadia Parish seat was discussed, but no decision has been made to fill the seat. The Police Jury President sent it in his resume.
- iii. Sarah told the board that since the last board meeting, there had been another Crisis Response meeting. Brad was in attendance, as was George Mills; George spoke about the mobile crisis program now in the area.
- iv. Carla told the board that St. Martin Parish received mental health and substance use programs. Dr. Harrison was asked to collaborate on prevention and education services. The STAR program and The Extra Mile held a meeting on Friday, February 6, 2025.

b. Agenda Calendar Items:

- i. **Executive Limit Pol 1.8: Compensation and Benefits (pg. 11):** Motion was made by Carol and seconded by Darce`; motion is carried unanimously.

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7. Comments from the Executive Director:

- a. **HR Department:** Brad acknowledged the hard work that the HR department does for AAHSD.
- b. **LDH/OBH CCBHC project update:** The application was submitted today, February 9, 2026; Brad noted that it was due on Wednesday, February 5, 2026, but an extension was granted. The information is being reviewed; a great deal of information was required for the application: reports, supporting documents, accreditations, etc. The district is still working on cost reporting; it is due on the 1st of March. If Louisiana gets all the required information submitted and approved, the earliest start date for the project would be January 2027. AAHSD has enough funding to carry over until January 2027, the start date.
- c. **AI Project:** ELEOS is the AI platform that is being considered to assist with clinical documentation; it will not replace the current system. Funding within CCHBC will cover the cost of the system. Carol asked whether the platform was HIPAA-compliant; Brad noted that it is. The platform will not replace a therapist; it helps facilitate documentation. The platform does not diagnose clients. Brad stated that he has participated in multiple webinars and spoken to other facilities that use the platform, and they are pleased. Brad stated he was unsure whether the platform could facilitate data retrieval; the current system can pull the required data.
- d. **MHCA Conference:** The conference is scheduled for May 12th-14th. Brad noted that the district has been a member for 2 years and is the only member in the state of Louisiana. To become a member, you must be sponsored and complete an interview process. Brad, along with Holly Howat and Tanya McGee, are scheduled to participate in a panel focusing on workforce development. Brad has been in contact with the President & CEO, Kiara Kuenzler, and asked the board whether they have any interest in scheduling for her to attend a board meeting over Zoom or in person. The board agreed it would be beneficial.
- e. **Project M.O.M:** Brad has been attending meetings supporting the project. It was noted that Brad had spoken to the Executive Director of The Extra Mile, George Mills, and they are ready to break ground on the first cottage that will be at Meredith's Place. Cottages will be available to mothers who have completed the program.
- f. **Data:** Bambi asked a follow-up question regarding the monthly numbers; she stated that the numbers were greatly different on the pages provided. Brad said he believed the reason for the difference was because of the "clean up" the district recently did. Brad stated he would follow up and provide the board with the information at the next board meeting.

8. Next Meeting: March 16, 2026

9. Adjournment: 4:01 pm - Motion made by Sarah and seconded by Carol to adjourn; motion to adjourn carried unanimously.

Darce Byrd^{MA}

Darce` Byrd, AAHSD Board Secretary