

State of Louisiana
MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JIMMY D. LONG SR. LOUISIANA SCHOOL FOR MATH, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS
June 10, 2024

The Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts met on Monday June 10, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Dr. Vickie Gentry welcomed members and guests and called the meeting to order. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Roll was called, and quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

- Representative Beryl Amedee
- Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (Chair)
- Dr. Greg Handel
- Kirby Hopkins
- Dr. William “Bill” Luster
- Tana Luther
- Meredith McGovern
- Regina Pierce
- Dr. Kyle Stephens
- Dr. Larry Tremblay
- Dr. Arthur S. Williams
- Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent

- Leanne Broussard
- Preston Castille
- Joseph E. “Jed” Cain
- David Claxton
- Lisa DeJean
- Jared Dunahoe
- Senator Katrina Jackson
- Marian “Suzy” Johnson
- Denise Karamales
- Jimmy D. Long Jr.
- Senator Beth Mizell
- Representative Charles Owen
- Debbie Troxclair

Guests Present

- Attorney Ken Sills, Hammonds, Sills, et al
- Dr. Jason Anderson, Director of Academic Affairs
- Emily Shumate, Director of Enrollment Management & Institutional Research
- Angela Couvillion, Registrar and Chief Articulation Officer
- Ro Slutsky, Director of Student Support Services
- Christie Price, Dean of Students
- Randi Washington, Director of the Living Community
- Dr. Timetope Fadipe, Instructor of Biology
- Michele Robinson, LSMSA Foundation Executive Director
- Cara Stanfield, Student Support Services
- Corey Poole, External Affairs

AGENDA ITEM 1: WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Board members will be introduced in September.

AGENDA ITEM 2: NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF CHAIR, PURSUANT TO BYLAWS ARTICLE A, PART 3, SECTION a

Nominations were requested for the position of Board Chair.

Upon nomination and motion duly made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Dr. Stephens, and unanimously passed, Dr. Gentry was elected to serve as Board Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 3: NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR, PURSUANT TO BYLAWS ARTICLE A, PART 3, SECTION a

Nominations were requested for the position of Board Vice-Chair.

Upon nomination and motion duly made by Ms. Pierce, seconded by Dr. Tremblay, and unanimously passed, Dr. Handel was elected to serve as Board Vice-Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 4: SELECTION BY CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, PURSUANT TO BYLAWS PART 3, ARTICLE A, SECTION b; and ARTICLE C, SECTION a

Dr. Gentry announced her selection of the Executive Committee to include Mrs. Pierce, Mr. Dunahoe, Dr. Luster, Dr. Handel (as vice chair), and herself (as chair). Dr. Horton serves as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Executive Committee and assumes the duties of secretary for the Executive Committee.

Dr. Gentry explained that in June 2020, the Board authorized the Executive Committee to act with the full authority of the Board on matters that may arise between regularly scheduled quarterly Board meetings. The actions of all Executive Committee meetings will always be ratified by the Board at the Board meeting following that Executive Committee meeting.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Tremblay, seconded by Ms. Pierce, and unanimously passed, the Board approved Dr. Gentry's selection of the Executive Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF MARCH 18, 2024, BOARD MINUTES

Dr. Gentry requested the Board's review of the March 18, 2024, minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Ms. McGovern, and unanimously passed, the minutes of the March 18, 2024, meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 6: CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Gentry reported that she had no requests for comment.

AGENDA ITEM 7: INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

Ms. Slutsky welcomed two new staff members to Student Support Services. Miranda Chatman, Administrative Coordinator and LEAP 2025 Test Coordinator, will provide administrative support to three areas – Student Support Services, Student Advocacy and Conduct, and Residence Life. Cara Stanfield, Coordinator of Student Academic Support, will assist with identifying student academic concerns, scheduling/overseeing supervised study mandates, and other duties as assigned for her position.

AGENDA ITEM 8: APPROVAL OF CREDENTIALS OF NEW FACULTY

Dr. Anderson presented the academic/professional credentials of Michael Young, Instructor of Instrumentals, Theory and Composition, who replaces Dr. Al Benner, following his retirement earlier this year. Crystal Lewis was elected by her peers to chair the Creative and Performing Arts Department.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Stephens, seconded by Dr. Tremblay, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the credentials of Mr. Young.

AGENDA ITEM 9: EXECUTIVE SESSION TO REPORT ON SPECIAL COMMITTEE REVIEW REGARDING ANNUAL EVALUATION OF LSMSA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Cain that the Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts move into Executive Session pursuant to R.S. 42:17 to discuss the findings of the Special Committee of the Board charged with reviewing the Annual Evaluation of the Executive Director, seconded by Rep. Amedee, and unanimously passed by Roll Call vote, the Board voted to enter into Executive Session.

Mr. Sills and Dr. Anderson were asked to remain in the Executive Session. All other guests in the room were asked to turn off recording devices and to exit the room until the Executive Session ended.

Following a motion duly made by Dr. Handel, seconded by Rep. Amedee, and unanimously passed, the Board returned to Regular Session at 1:30 p.m.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Handel, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the Board accepted the Executive Committee's "Satisfactory" rating of LSMSA Executive Director Dr. Horton.

AGENDA ITEM 10: RATIFICATION OF THE FOUNDATION'S FACULTY/STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS SINCE MARCH 2024

Four (4) employees received reimbursements from the LSMSA Foundation for matters related to theatre/stage productions, furnishings for the LLC Guest Suite, and enrollment travel expenses.

Upon motion duly made by Rep. Amedee, seconded by Dr. Luster, and unanimously passed, the Board ratified the Foundation's faculty/staff reimbursements paid since the March 18, 2024, Board meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 11: APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE *ACADEMIC AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE HANDBOOK* for 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

The Agenda Exhibit contained a summary of the changes, all of which have been reviewed by Mr. Sills for legality and appropriateness. One major area of discussion regarded student access to the NSU campus as well as off-campus privileges and how they differed from the previous policies. Dress code changes were also addressed and appreciated by Rep. Amedee and other Board members.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. McGovern, seconded by Dr. Stephens, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the proposed amendments to the *Academic and Residential Life Handbook*.

AGENDA ITEM 12: APPROVAL OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Dean Price explained that this policy was being presented in response to the U. S. Department of Education's federal requirement that the existing non-discrimination policy clarify the definition of discrimination. The policy was reviewed by Mr. Sills for legality and appropriateness.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Hopkins, seconded by Dr. Stephens, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the Non-Discrimination Policy.

AGENDA ITEM 13: APPROVAL OF TITLE IX POLICY FOR EMPLOYEE REPORTS OR COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Mr. Sills explained that the present state administration plans to file an injunction to block the 2024 Title IX revisions to take effect on August 1, 2024.

To be compliant and have an approved policy when students return to campus in August, LSMSA's administration amended its Title IX Policy for Employee Reports or Complaints of Sexual Harassment to reflect the revised federal 2024 regulations in the event that an injunction was not

filed. Mr. Sills recommended the Board approve the revised Title IX Policy for Employee Reports or Complaints of Sexual Harassment that would align with the 2024 regulations that would become effective August 1, 2024, unless an injunction was filed. In that case, LSMSA would revert to the existing Title IX Policy for Employee Reports or Complaints of Sexual Harassment that is based on the 2020 regulations.

Dr. Horton clarified that the Board has the option of taking no action on the revised policy, approving the revised policy as presented; or approving the policy with a caveat that if an injunction was filed that LSMSA would revert back to the existing Title IX Policy for Employee Reports or Complaints of Sexual Harassment that is based on the 2020 regulations.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Hopkins to approve the amended Title IX Policy for Employee Reports or Complaints of Sexual Harassment with the caveat that if there were delays or stops due to a court order or an injunction in the Louisiana jurisdiction, that the existing Title IX Policy for Employee Reports or Complaints of Sexual Harassment approved in 2022 would continue to be followed. The motion was seconded by Dr. Stephens, and unanimously passed.

AGENDA ITEM 14: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Horton said the School expects several bills that were passed the legislature to be signed into law; all would affect current LSMSA policies. He also expressed his personal thanks to the Louisiana Legislature, the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees, and specifically Rep. Amedee, for their help as LSMSA navigated funding the Faculty Salary Index.

His brief report indicated that the Directors' reports would contain more detailed information about enrollment, student activities, fundraising, and budget matters; and he again thanked Dr. Ebarb for "coming out of retirement" a third time and serving the school as an administrator.

Mr. Sills then briefed the Board on legislation signed into law and those pending signatures that could affect operations at LSMSA.

Those already signed into law include:

- **ACT 324:** Requires a local parish school board to adopt rules and regulations and designate a specific employee to oversee and assist personnel in identifying behavioral and mental health assessments that could cause risk.
- **ACT 331:** Suicide Prevention mandates that the School include 988# on its website and student IDs.
- **ACT 352:** Provides for a prohibition against the use of tobacco/smoking on campus, including school buses, and defines smoking and the types of prohibited devices.
- **ACT 378:** Requires schools keep an adequate supply of Narcan on hand for opioid overdoses.
- **ACT 436:** Women's safety and protection act/restroom act, based on sex assigned at birth

Those not yet signed into law include:

- **HB 71:** Mandatory display of the 10 Commandments;
- **HB 121:** *Given Name Act* and the use of pronouns; and
- **HB 429:** No public-school governing authority shall serve seafood from outside the United States

Dr. Tremblay asked if LSMSA currently collects birth certificates for purposes of verification for ACT 436; Ms. Couvillion and Ms. Shumate provided confirmation.

AGENDA ITEM 15: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY

Dr. Stephens gave an enthusiastic report and compared the process of teaching at LSMSA each year to NASA's multiple endeavors of moon/space exploration -- the process may be more familiar, but it doesn't get any easier. It never becomes routine; and anything worth achieving should be hard to do.

He said the faculty finished this year strong and made a few brief comments, including:

- Congratulating Dr. Anderson on fully and permanently ascending to the DAA position;
- Congratulating Dr. Brad Burkman, who earned the PhD in computer science in May;
- Recognizing Dr. Jocelyn Donlon, an English professor, who traveled to Turkey, courtesy of the Brown Fund. She attended the conference at the university where she served as a Fulbright Scholar 22 years ago in 2002. Some of her students who are now LSMSA alumni are at the University of Turkey directing the American Studies program;
- Recognizing Dr. Kristi Key, an English Professor, who is spending this summer creating a new class on 19th Century American literature;
- Celebrating Dr. Morris Tichenor, a Languages professor, who is doing a million things, as always; and
- Recognizing Greg Wascoe, a voice professor, who is finishing his first year at LSMSA and will be performing in Durham Cathedral in England in July.

AGENDA ITEM 16: DIVISION REPORTS

Dr. Gentry referred the Board to the Division Reports that were included in their binders. She asked if there were any questions from the Directors; Drs. Ebarb and Anderson addressed specific issues raised by Board members.

- **Finance and Operations (Dr. Ebarb)** LSMSA's budget request was submitted in a timely manner and was well met by the Division of Administration. Alladin (contract food service provider) increased their annual costs, and the same was true for legal services. The school received a supplemental appropriation from the legislature to cover these unforeseen cost increases.

Dr. Ebarb explained details regarding faculty salary adjustments based on approval of the Salary Index, which is required by law. Legislators funded the annual step adjustments, but the funding needed provided by the FY25 budget failed to meet the total amount needed to

fund the step increases. Dr. Ebarb explained that he and Dr. Horton were working with the legislature to address a way to fully fund the step increases. The use of ESSER II restricted funds is ending. ESSER III funds will be used to construct a metal building behind the gym that would serve multiple groups on campus (ie facilities and theatre).

Additionally, an Outdoor Classroom will be built in the courtyard where the current handicap ramp is. It will have six columns and a roof, and can be used for outdoor classes, day or night. It will also be a great place for students to gather and host events. These two projects being paid for with ESSER III funds total \$330K.

The Innovation Center, a project co-sponsored by LSMSA and NSU, continues to be part of House Bill 2 as of this meeting. The goal of LSMSA and NSU is to generate funding for one-third of the project, and state funds would be used to cover the remaining balance.

Questions were asked about staffing, maintenance, and other responsibilities. Dr. Horton indicated that NSU and LSMSA will share these responsibilities. NSU is committed to provide security.

- **Academic Affairs (Dr. Anderson)** LSMSA enjoyed a strong Blue & Gold Week that showcased academic endeavors by several students – 15 distinctions, 7 capstones, and numerous recitals by the Class of 2024. When asked about the possibility of reinstating in-person summer school, he explained the challenges presented by rising overhead costs and restricted budgets during the summer months. Dr. Anderson added that many LSMSA students are enrolling early in colleges and universities across the state and picking up college credit through the dual enrollment policy guidelines while being home for the summer.

The graduating class was awarded \$32 million in scholarships as of this meeting. That number continues to increase as FASFA rules are changing. ACT averages are expected to be available in September.

AGENDA ITEM 17: OTHER BUSINESS

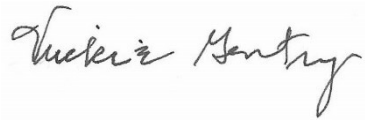
Three New Student Orientation sessions are being held over the summer. Faculty in-service will begin Aug. 12. Students return Aug. 16, and the first day of classes is Wednesday, Aug. 21.

The next Board meeting will be held Sept. 16, followed by the next meeting on Dec. 9. Tentative 2025 dates are March 17 and June 16; all will begin at 1 p.m. Dr. Horton explained that many of the Board's ex-officio positions defined by current legislation have changed drastically and will possibly need to be amended by the legislature in the future.

There being no further business,

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Stephens, seconded by Dr. Tremblay, and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vickie S. Gentry". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Vickie S. Gentry, Ph.D.
Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven G. Horton". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Steven G. Horton, Ph.D.
Secretary