

State of Louisiana

**APPROVED MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**JIMMY D. LONG SR. LOUISIANA SCHOOL FOR MATH, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS
September 15, 2025**

The Jimmy D. Long Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts Board of Directors met on Monday, September 15, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Dr. Vickie S. Gentry served as chair. She welcomed members and guests and called the meeting to order. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Roll was called, and a quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

- Rep. Beryl Amedee
- Leanne Broussard (arrived at 1:15 p.m.)
- Dr. Susannah Craig
- Jared R. Dunahoe
- Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (Chair)
- Dr. Greg Handel (Vice Chair)
- Kirby Hopkins (via Teams)
- Denise Karamales
- Dr. William “Bill” Luster
- Meredith McGovern
- William C. “Bill” New
- Regina B. Pierce
- Jeff Powell
- Dr. Kyle Stephens
- Carolyn Wilkinson
- Dr. Arthur S. Williams
- Dr. Steven Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent

- Joseph E. “Jed” Cain
- Jimmy D. Long, Jr.
- Tana Luther
- Stacey Melerine
- Senator Blake Miguez
- Representative Charles A. Owen
- Senator Alan Seabaugh

- Debbie Troxclair

Guests Present

- Dr. Bill Ebarb, Director of Finance, Operations & Technology/Deputy Executive Director
- Dr. Wayne Stewart
- Donna Martin
- Dr. Jason Anderson
- Angela Couvillion
- Ro Slutsky
- Randi Washington
- Emily Shumate
- Michelle Robinson, Foundation
- Ben Marchel, Foundation
- Dr. Samuel Boateng
- Samuel Mazhandu
- Layla Hayes
- Noel Todd
- Stephen Juneau
- Molly Talbot, LDOE
- Monika Garlapati

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMEBERS

Dr. Gentry welcomed Board members and guests and had a moment of silent reflection remembering the 9/11 events and recent dark events from the prior week. Dr. Anderson and Ms. Washington introduced the new faculty and staff. Dr. Gentry pinned new Board members (Jeff Powell and Carolyn Wilkinson).

AGENDA ITEM 1: APPROVAL OF JUNE 16, 2025, BOARD MINUTES

Dr. Gentry requested the Board's review of the June 16, 2025, minutes for any additions or corrections.

Upon motion made by Dr. Williams and seconded by Mr. New, the minutes of June 16, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF AUGUST 7, 2025, EXECUTIVE ECOMMITTEE MINUTES

Dr. Gentry requested the Board's review of the August 7, 2025, meeting minutes for any additions or corrections.

Upon motion made by Ms. McGovern and seconded by Mr. New, the minutes of August 7, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CALL FOR COMMENT – None

AGENDA ITEM 4: RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUGUST 7, 2025

Upon motion made by Dr. Handel and seconded by Dr. Stephens, the ratification of actions of August 7, 2025, meeting was approved.

AGENDA ITEM 5: RATIFICATION OF FACULTY/STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS FROM LSMSA FOUNDATION

Dr. Horton requested the Board's review of Exhibit 1 that included faculty/staff reimbursements for the current quarter and asked for questions and approval.

Upon motion made by Rep. Amedee and seconded by Mr. Dunahoe, the ratification of faculty/staff reimbursements from LSMSA Foundation was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 6: APPROVAL OF FY27 PROPOSED FUNDING FORMULA

Dr. Ebarb explained that state law requires the Board to annually adopt a funding formula, developed in response to historical funding challenges. The formula is based on per-pupil expenditure, aiming to match funding levels of similar schools. Revenue Sources: (1) State General Fund, (2) Interagency Transfers – fund from other agencies, (3) Self-Generated Fees – e.g., room and board, (4) Statutory Dedication – primarily from the Tobacco Settlement Fund (\$75,000 + per-student allocation), and (5) Minimum Foundation Program (MFP). The formula calculates total funding by multiplying the number of students by the average cost per student, then subtracting other revenue sources. The remaining amount is covered by the State General Fund. This formula has been consistently used and is proposed again for FY27.

Upon motion made by Ms. McGovern and seconded by Dr. Luster, the FY27 Proposed Funding Formula was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 7: APPROVAL OF USE OF EEF FUNDS FOR FY26

Dr. Ebarb explained the Educator Excellence Fund (EEF):

- LSMSA receives approximately \$79,000 annually from the Tobacco Settlement Fund, used for summer programs and teacher professional development
- If EEF funding ends, the school will need to seek replacement funds from the state.
- Unused EEF funds roll into a state treasury account, currently totaling over \$930,000, which LSMSA can access if needed.

- For FY26, LSMSA proposes a \$301,000 EEF budget: \$81,000 from the annual allocation and \$220,000 from the treasury reserve
- Planned uses include summer programs, \$20,000 for professional development, \$150,000 for urgent repairs to Treen Auditorium, \$35,000 for counselor salaries
- If the constitutional amendment eliminates EEF, the reserve funds are expected to remain accessible.

Upon motion made by Mr. Dunahoe and seconded by Mrs. Pierce, the Use of EEF Funds for FY26 was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 8: APPROVAL OF FY26 BUDGET

Dr. Ebarb provided an update on the FY 26 Budget showing the Budget is adjusted for overestimated revenues (e.g., Virtual School and room/board fees); Division of Administration funded adjunct stipends and dorm security; denied teacher raise, later approved by legislature; Budget starts in deficit but avails overspending; Infrastructure needs remain and major repairs are deferred; Technology upgrades follow a rotating replacement cycles; Federal funds (Title I, II, V) total approximately \$45,000 - \$52,000 per year; and EXCEL summer program supports underrepresented students using Title I funds.

Upon motion made by Dr. Williams and seconded by Mrs. Karamales, the FY26 Budget was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 9: APPROVAL OF THE FACULTY/STAFF SALARY SCHEDULE

Dr. Ebarb explained that LSMSA proposes a 3% step increase to the faculty and staff salary schedule for FY26, as required annually by state law. The legislature supports funding the adjustment, though the Division of Administration has previously resisted. The updated schedule will guide next year's budget request.

Upon motion made by Dr. Handel and seconded by Dr. Craig, the Faculty/Staff Salary Schedule for FY26 was unanimously approved.

AGENDA ITEM 10: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Horton reported that LSMSA began the school year with 287 students, with minimal attrition. A major electrical system upgrade was completed with support from the City of Natchitoches. Staff received training on 504 accommodations, which is increasing post-pandemic. Connections Weekend will celebrate alumni from 1985 to present. The Innovation Center project is progressing, with architectural planning underway and a faculty trip to Rice University scheduled for further development insights. LSMSA hosted a highly successful college fair featuring over 30 universities, including Ivy League schools. The event drew 400 attendees from across central and northern Louisiana, showcasing LSMSA's outreach and college readiness efforts.

AGENDA ITEM 11: UPDATES REGARDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S SEARCH

Dr. Handel outlined the formation of an 11-member committee, chaired by Dr. Handel. The committee will include:

- Dr. Greg Handel, representing the Board and NSU
- Rep. Beryl Amedee, representing the Board and the state;
- Dr. Vickie Gentry, representing the Board;
- Keenan Kelly, representing the Natchitoches community and as a former parent;
- Allison Landry, representing the faculty;
- Dr. Kyle Stephens, representing the Board and faculty;
- Ben Marcel, representing the LSMSA Foundation and as an alumnus;
- Emily Shumate, representing the staff;
- Dr. Arthur Williams, representing the Board and former parent;
- Tana Luther, representing the Board and as an alumnus; and
- Mr. Bill New, representing the Board and as a former parent.

The timeline includes advertising, virtual interviews in early 2026, and on-campus interviews in April. Final recommendations will be presented at the June Board meeting, with the new Executive Director expected to begin July 1, 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT FROM FACULTY

Dr. Stephens shared a heartfelt message from a recent alumnus expressing appreciation for LSMSA's academic environment and faculty. He emphasized the meaningful impact of faculty on students, especially as alumni reflect on their experiences. Current students are beginning to engage more deeply with faculty, continuing the school's tradition of close mentorship and community.

AGENDA ITEM 13: DIVISION DIRECTOR REPORTS

Dr. Gentry reminded Board members that Director Reports were available for review and noted that two division directors would present updates at each quarterly Board meeting.

Dean of Students

Ms. Washington reported several updates from the Office of Student Affairs, including staff title changes and an open position for a Student Life Advisor (SLA). Student engagement remains strong, with popular programs such as a Mac & Cheese bar and Midnight Volleyball, and Hall Council leading a redesign of the LSMSA Christmas float. Health Services implemented a new policy allowing students to carry ADHD medication with parental consent, supported by clinical nursing students assisting with care and upcoming flu vaccinations. Over 300 student interactions were recorded in September, and the Guardian system is being used across departments for student support and

documentation. Athletics hosted a successful sports fair featuring 18 club sports, and LSMSA is exploring LHSAA qualification while launching a student leadership academy. Fencing and volleyball are gaining popularity under a new coach, and more than 30 student organizations are currently active. Conduct infractions remain low and are primarily attendance-related, and the Eagle Stock fundraiser is scheduled for October 4.

Enrollment Management and Outreach

Mrs. Shumate reported that LSMSA enrolled 287 students this year—140 new and 147 returning—with an incoming class averaging a 26.5 ACT score and 3.9 GPA, representing 42 parishes and including 30% first-generation college-bound students. She noted a continued gender imbalance favoring female students and raised concerns about limited gifted services statewide. In response to growing interest in early admission and virtual schooling, LSMSA is exploring expanded outreach, summer programs, and virtual options, with the Arkansas TIP program model under review as a potential framework.

LSMSA Foundation

Mrs. Robinson addressed the Board expressing enthusiasm for collaboration between LSMSA's Board of Trustees and the Foundation. She emphasized the importance of aligning efforts to support students and school's long-term goals. A joint meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2026, to strengthen this partnership. Additionally, the Foundation will publicly launch its "Giving Together" campaign with a \$10M goal – over \$5M has already been raised.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Ms. Pierce, seconded by Mr. New, and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED



Vickie S. Gentry, Ph.D.
Chair



Steven G. Horton, Ph.D.
Secretary