State of Louisiana

APPROVED MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JIMMY D. LONG, SR. LOUISIANA SCHOOL FOR MATH, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS
December 8, 2025

The Jimmy D. Long Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts Board of Directors met on Monday, December 8, 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. Donna L. Martin recorded the minutes. Roll was called, and a quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

- Rep. Beryl Amedee
- Leanne M. Broussard
- Jared R. Dunahoe
- Dr. Vickie S. Gentry (Chair)
- Denise Karamales
- Dr. William “Bill” Luster
- Tana Luther
- William C. “Bill” New
- Rep. Charles A. Owen
- Regina Pierce
- Dr. Kyle Stephens
- Carolyn Wilkinson
- Dr. Arthur S. Williams
- Dr. Steven Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent

- Dr. Greg Handel (attended via Teams and did not count toward quorum and did not vote)
- Joseph E. “Jed” Cain

- Dr. Susannah Craig
- Kirby Hopkins
- Jimmy D. Long, Jr.
- Meredith McGovern
- Stacey Melerine
- Sen. Blake Miguez
- Jeff Powell
- Sen. Alan Seabaugh
- Dr. Debbie Troxclair

Guests Present

- Dr. Bill Ebarb
- Dr. Wayne Stewart
- Anne Dejoie-Lucas
- Dr. Jason Anderson
- Angela Couvillion
- Emily Shumate
- Randi Washington
- Nicolle Niette
- Michelle Robinson
- Ben Marcel
- Danny Ye
- Anah Davis
- Amelia Willis
- Monika Garlapatti
- David Li

AGENDA ITEM 1: WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Gentry welcomed Board members and guests after a long weekend with Christmas Festival Events. Dr. Williams donated a rare photograph of Albert Einstein taken by David Eisendraht in the 1930's, originally gifted to his family by Dr. W.L. Morris. The first print resides in the Gibbes Art Gallery in Charleston, SC; this second print will be displayed on the third floor of the Physics hallway to inspire students. A brochure from the Gibbes Art Gallery accompanies the donation.

Dr. Gentry recognized that there were no new Board members since the September 15, 2025, meeting.

Dr. Gentry welcomed students from the Athletics Council to request donations for the M.A.S.H. Toy drive, in collaboration with the Natchitoches Jaycees, to provide toys for underprivileged children. Donations are accepted through December 10; QR codes were made available to Board members on flyers.

AGENDA ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2025, BOARD MINUTES

Board members reviewed the September 15, 2025, minutes. Mr. Bill New suggested two changes, and Dr. Gentry requested a motion to approve the minutes with those revisions.

> **Upon Motion made by Dr. Art Williams, and seconded by Mr. Bill New, the minutes of September 15, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.**

AGENDA ITEM 3: CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Gentry recognized that there were no requests for public comments.

AGENDA ITEM 4: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATES

Dr. Handel, via Teams, explained that the Executive Director Search Committee has advertised the position for 4 – 5 weeks and received three applications. Additional interest is expected after the holidays. The committee will meet to create a shortlist for virtual interviews, followed by campus interviews in the spring.

AGENDA ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF 2026-2027 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Ms. Couvillion presented the proposed 2026-2027 academic calendar, including start/end dates and breaks. Dr. Williams raised questions about contact days and continuity of instruction; faculty reported that the current calendar worked well, with breaks and midterms appropriately timed. Dr. Horton noted that three-week intervals between breaks helped maintain discipline. Angela Couvillion clarified withdrawal policies: "without W" removes the course from the record; "with W" indicates withdrawal after midterms.

> **Upon motion made by Dr. Williams, and seconded by Dr. Luster, the 2026-2027 School Calendar was unanimously approved.**

AGENDA ITEM 6: APPROVAL OF NEW COURSES

Dr. Anderson requested approval for a new course, *Basketball Theory with Advanced Technique and Strategy,* for Spring 2026. The course, limited to boys' and girls' basketball team members, builds on the success of the previously approved volleyball technique class.

> **Upon motion made by Dr. Stephens, and seconded by Dr. Williams, the approval of the new course was unanimously approved.**

AGENDA ITEM 7: RATIFICATION OF FOUNDATION FACULTY/STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 15, 2025, BOARD MEETING

Dr. Horton requested ratification of four faculty reimbursements for meals and travel, paid by the LSMSA Foundation

> **Upon Motion made by Mr. Dunahoe, and seconded by Ms. Pierce, the ratification of Foundation Faculty/Staff Reimbursements for the quarter was unanimously approved.**

AGENDA ITEM 8: APPROVAL OF LEGISLATIVE ONE-TIME STIPEND DISTRIBUTION PLAN FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Ebarb presented the Legislative One-Time Stipend Distribution Plan. All unclassified staff qualify based on object and function codes. Certificated teachers will receive $2,000; non-certificated staff will receive $1,000. An additional differentiated stipend for certificated teachers includes a $100 base plus $15 per year of service.

> **Upon Motion made by Mr. Dunahoe, and seconded by Ms. Karamales, the approval of the One-Time Stipend Distribution Plan for Faculty and Staff was unanimously approved.**

AGENDA ITEM 9: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Horton reported that students are completing final exams and end-of-semester activities following Christmas Festival events. LSMSA ranked first in Louisiana in Niche ratings, supporting recruitment efforts. He highlighted upcoming reports on enrollment, academics, and budget. The Innovation Center project is progressing, with anticipated $1.2M funding and partnerships including Bank of Montgomery and the Chamber of Commerce. Facility upgrades are planned, shifting from window replacement through potential energy-efficiency grants. The Foundation's 2025 Impact Report was distributed, noting alumni contributions.

AGENDA ITEM 10: ATTORNEY REPORT

Upon motion made by Dr. Williams, and seconded by Mr. Dunahoe, and unanimously passed by roll call vote of the members present, the Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, entered Executive Session pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 42:17(A)(2) to discuss litigation strategy and matters related to *Hodge vs. LSMSA*.

All guests and non-essential personnel were asked to leave the room, and Mrs. Martin announced that all audio recording devices would be turned off during the Executive Session. Dr. Stewart, Dr. Horton, and Dr. Ebarb were asked to remain in Executive Session by Dr. Gentry. The Board of Directors entered Executive Session at 1:33 p.m.

Upon motion made by Mr. Dunahoe, seconded by Ms. Pierce, and unanimously passed, the Board returned to Regular Session at 2:23 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 11: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY

Dr. Stephens thanked Dr. Williams for his donation and noted challenges this semester, including slower student adjustment, technology distractions, and increased use of AI tools. Faculty are adapting assignments to maintain academic integrity and critical thinking. Turnitin is used to detect AI-generated work. Despite these issues, faculty remain committed to student success and expect improvement in the spring.

AGENDA ITEM 12: DIVISION REPORTS

Deputy ED/Finance and Operations

Dr. Ebarb reported on the current budget and next year's request, noting a $4M capital outlay previously approved but later withdrawn statewide. Project limits are now capped at $250K, requiring larger items to go through capital outlay. The school is requesting $2M more than last year to cover the salary adjustments (4% classified, 3% unclassified), faculty advancement, rebidding of food service (anticipated increase in cost of +$200K), ADA compliance, leave payouts, and critical upgrades such as the

1984 fire alarm system. Priorities include salaries, food service, and compliance needs. Budget requests have been submitted; funding outcomes remain uncertain.

Student Support Services

Mrs. Slutsky's oral report was postponed to the next meeting. Written reports were provided; directors were available for questions.

Representative Amedee requested an update on student health. Dr. Anderson noted that academic stress mid-semester activities often coincide with physical and mental challenges, which improve in spring. Dr. Ebarb reported 150-200 weekly nurse-involved visits, mostly minor issues; less than 1% require outside care. Telemedicine and nursing staff manage student medical needs effectively.

Ms. Washington highlighted increasing mental health and medication demands, with 1,700 health interactions this semester, stressing the need for more resources. Dr. Horton added that there were plans to fund an additional PE coach and retain a counselor to support wellness.

AGENDA ITEM 13: OTHER BUSINESS/UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming events include the Holiday Concert, MASH Toy Drive, Exams, and Winter Break. The next joint meeting with the Foundation is scheduled for Friday, March 13, 2026, starting at 10 a.m. followed by lunch and the regular Board meeting at 1 p.m. Mr. Ben Marcel emphasized the importance of collaboration between the two boards to advance shared goals.

AGENDA ITEM 14: *TENTATIVE* 2026 BOARD MEETING DATES

- **Friday, March 13, 2026** (10 a.m. with LSMSA Foundation Board; 1 p.m. BOD only)
- **Monday, June 15, 2026**

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Ms. Pierce, seconded by Mr. Dunahoe, and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Vickie S. Gentry, Ph.D.
Chair

Steven G. Horton, Ph.D.
Secretary