



# Louisiana Special School District

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## Louisiana Special School District Board of Directors

### Board Meeting May 13, 2025 at 9:00AM

Louisiana Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired  
2888 Brightside Dr., Baton Rouge, LA 70820  
Student Activity Center, Room 196

### Meeting Minutes

#### I. **Call to Order**

The May 13, 2025, meeting of the Special School District Board of Directors was called to order at 9:29 a.m. by Ms. Kristy Flynn, Board President. Members present at the meeting include: Ms. Maria Annis, Ms. Sherry Crosby, Mr. Kenny Davis, Mr. Jamar Ennis, Mr. Ronnie Morris, and Ms. Jessica White - arrived late (exact time not recorded). Members not in attendance: Ms. Vickie Smith and Ms. Katherine Presley.

#### II. **New Business**

##### **A. Approval of the March 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Motion by: Ms. Crosby moved to approve the March 18, 2025, Minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis, and it was unanimously approved.

##### **B. Meeting Dates for 25-26 FY**

Motion by Ms. Crosby moved to approve the upcoming meeting dates as July 15, 2025, September 9, 2025, November 12, 2025, January 13, 2026, March 10, 2026, and May 5, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ennis and it was unanimously approved.

##### **C. Deadline for the Board's Qualitative/Quantitative Measures**

Quantitative measures will be brought to the board at the July 15, 2025, meeting. Board surveys should be submitted ASAP. Each board member must provide a list of 3–5 stakeholder names for survey distribution on May 28, 2025. Dr. Martin's office provided an additional stakeholder list. All survey results must be in and processed 2–3 weeks before the September 9, 2025, board meeting. Ms. Flynn reported that she has already distributed surveys to the SSP program at Pinecrest and to her workplace, Central Louisiana Supports and Services Center, and has received approximately 30 responses.

Dr. Martin notes that after requesting the compressive report of the qualitative measures multiple times from last year's evaluation, he did not receive it. This year the actual measures for the evaluation was not determined until February. Dr. Martin requested a copy of the final totals of each category of the qualitative measures, to identify key areas to focus on for improvement.

Mr. Morris emphasized the importance of establishing goals 12 months in advance of the superintendent's evaluation to ensure that the expectations are clear and aligned with district priorities. He encouraged board members to review the qualitative and quantitative goals previously agreed upon, to ensure mutual understanding and alignment on reasonable expectations. He also noted the importance of recognizing performance

trends and appreciating the progress made over time.

**D. SSD Internal Auditor**

**E. Superintendent Recommendation: Addition to the Internal Audit Charter for findings involving the Superintendent**

Dr. Martin certifies that agenda items D and E will be reported together, and Dr. Martin reported that by law SSD must have an internal auditor due to its \$39.5M budget, which exceeds the \$30M legal threshold. A recent hire for this role left SSD to transfer to another agency. Because the position is legally required, he submitted it for an exemption from the hiring freeze.

Audit charter has been revised. The previous auditor reported to legal to ensure neutrality, but going forward, the position will report to the appointing authority, in line with common practice. The updated charter includes a section titled "Reporting of Material Findings Involving the Superintendent".

Mr. Morris asked if there is a timetable for the hiring of the position. Dr. Martin reported that with the hiring freeze we are unaware of the timeline. Mr. Morris asked if there are any audit findings currently. Dr. Martin reported that SSD is currently in their biennial audit with Louisiana Legislative Auditor currently has no findings, but the audit goes until June 30, 2025. SSD will receive a complete report after June 30. SSD just completed the Medicaid audit. Dr. Martin will follow up with an email to the board members regarding all audit findings.

**F. Grievance Hearing Matter #2024-01 "Matter will be taken up in Executive Session"**

Motion by Mr. Davis to move into Executive Session, seconded by Ms. White before the vote was finalized Ms. Crosby requested preliminary information before her vote. Ms. Flynn provided clarification, that there was a grievance back in January and the personnel committee heard the grievance and during the executive session the board will receive those reports. The motion was then put to a vote and was unanimously passed to enter executive session.

Public comment by Ms. Whitney Green on Agenda Item II.F Grievance Hearing Matter #2024-01 "Matter will be taken up in Executive Session" Ms. Greene clarified that her grievance was filed in November, not January. Noted that, as both the district's attorney and the grievant, along with open meetings law compliance, including whether the hearing was properly noticed. The need to cite a specific reason when entering executive session, potential personal liability for board members. Stated that previous meeting minutes may need to be amended. Questioned whether board members had been provided with or reviewed the 300-page transcript related to the grievance. Asked what the board intended to accomplish during the executive session. Stressed the importance of transparency and requested the opportunity to be heard during the process. One exception to going into executive session is to discuss the character and fitness of someone. The board would need to amend the minutes to reflect the reason to go into executive session, meeting one of those 9 exceptions. If declared character and fitness, that was not noticed correctly. If it's an investigation, I'm told that was done in December. Requesting it to be heard in public, but it was not noticed correctly for today's board meeting.

Mr. Morris reported that the item is presented accurately on the agenda and has properly documented the session if the board decides to go into executive session.

Mr. Ennis requested that all parties be properly notified of the hearing if it is to be discussed in public.

Mr. Bourgeois reports under Statute 42:17, the board may enter executive session for investigative proceedings related to misconduct allegations. These allegations were previously heard during a December personnel committee hearing, which resulted in a recommendation.

Today's executive session allows personnel committee members to advise the board about those proceedings and what took place. Ms. Greene is present and available to answer any board member questions.

Mr. Morris requests agenda item F grievance hearing matter 2024-01, recognizing that all documentation relative to that hearing is continued there to address the concerns raised.

Mr. Bourgeois said that the subject of the matter has the right to waive the right to take up in executive session it can be heard in public if that's what's being requested.

Mr. Ennis requested at the appropriate time to set ground rules before going into executive session.

Mr. Bourgeois spoke of ground rules members of the personnel committee would present the matter and the board would vote on whether or not to accept the decision of the personnel committee.

Ms. Crosby questioned how many people are on the personnel committee? Ms. Flynn reported 3: Mr. Ennis, Mr. Morris and Ms. Flynn. During in the hearing only 2 were available (Ms. Flynn and Mr. Morris as Mr. Ennis was not available).

Dr. Martin reports there are 3 others involved in this grievance note that Ms. Greene is not the only one with said story. If other people's character and fitness are being questioned, should they also have the right to hear that in executive session? Requesting counsel from the board to answer because Ms. Greene is counsel for the agency and not counsel for the board.

Mr. Bourgeois made a recommendation to defer the matter to the next meeting, meeting with Ms. Greene to stylize the agenda. Board counsel disagrees with Ms. Greene as the board has the right to go into executive session without having an agenda item with 2/3 vote.

Ms. Flynn reported that we are deferring this to the next scheduled meeting, and getting the board members all the supporting documents along with getting them brailled. Mr. Bourgeois agreed.

Motion by: Mr. Ennis to defer grievance to next scheduled meeting, July 15, 2025, along with all supporting documents. Seconded by Mr. Morris, it was unanimously approved.

#### **G. SSD Board Officer Elections**

Motion by Mr. Morris to defer this agenda item until July 15, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kenny Davis, and it was unanimously approved.

## **H. Superintendent's Report**

**LA School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI)** - Ms. Susan Covington, Executive Director of LSVI, provided updates on LSVI State Braille challenge, sports, student test scores, testing dates, and graduation date.

**LA School for the Deaf (LSD)** - Dr. Natalie Delgado, Executive Director of LSD, provided updates on LSD school highlights with end of the year graduations, middle schoolers transition into the high school for the day, test scores, summer planning and CEASD accreditation process to start soon.

**Special Schools Programs (SSP)** - Ms. Lexie Walker, Regional Coordinator, LA Supports and Services, Center Executive Director of SSP, provided updates for SSP on student test scores, milestones on the high number of enrollments, upcoming events, and highlighted CLSSC.

**District Wide Supports (DWS)** - Ms. Nancy Rawls, Executive Director of DWS presented updates on attendance, athletics for the upcoming year events being hosted on SSD Baton Rouge Campus.

**Statewide Services and Supports (SWSS)** – Dr. Kathy Segers, Executive Director of SWSS, provided updates on Federal Quota Census, LIMC, braille and large print titles ordered, AEM student consults, Tech Assist professional development, and state conference attendance.

**Operations** – Mr. Jeff Jacobs, Executive Director of Operations, provided updates on current projects emergency notification system, electrical and plumbing upgrades on campus, and road upgrades around campus.

**Business and Finance** - Ms. Delvikeo Picou, Executive Director of Business Services, provided updates on job appointments, separations and transfers. In addition to sabbatical, extended sick leave and FMLA. Discussion on setting up finance committee.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. David Martin, Superintendent, advised that the budge freeze is underway, and that the district has submitted a waiver for student-facing positions. All exemption requests are for student-facing roles, with the exception of the internal auditor as stated earlier in the meeting. We are pending these requests at the moment. Mr. Davis asked if student enrollment is increasing. Dr. Martin explained that he did not feel that our growth would impact staffing needs. The growth would have to be significant (20+) to impact the staffing needs.

- **School Planning:**

LSD submitted school plans early due to state requirements. Remaining school plans are in progress as part of a district-wide, streamlined process. Unified expectations across schools will enable better support and resource alignment. Plans will be made public in early June to provide transparency and direction. OJJ sites are excluded, as they follow a separate planning process.

- **Strategic Planning:**

A 5-year strategic planning process is being launched with stakeholder involvement. Though an 8G grant was not secured, internal funds may cover external support. A proposal from Innivee Strategies (Deaf-owned, national experience) has been received, and others are being explored. The goal is to form a board committee, identify stakeholders, gather data by December, and hold meetings to develop the plan. The final strategic roadmap is expected by the 2026–27 school year.

Mr. Morris inquired about how meeting minutes are being captioned, referencing prior discussions about using a court reporter. Dr. Martin clarified that the minutes are captured through a captioning service, which provides real-time transcription of the meeting.

### **III. Adjournment**

Motion by Mr. Ennis to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Mr. Morris.

1. Public Comment Policy – Members of the public shall be allowed to speak on items presented for action consistent with the Board’s public comment policy and for a time period to be determined at the Board’s discretion.
2. The Board reserves the right to enter into Executive Session, if needed, in accordance with La. R.S. 42:16 and 42:17, the Open Meetings Law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance regarding the meeting, please contact Kattie Sheppard at [ksheppard@lsdvi.org](mailto:ksheppard@lsdvi.org).