

STATE OF LOUISIANA
MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JIMMY D. LONG SR. LOUISIANA SCHOOL FOR MATH, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS
June 19, 2023

The Board of Directors of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts met on Monday June 19, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in the Jimmy D. Long Board Room, LSMSA, in Natchitoches, LA. Mrs. Sharon Gahagan welcomed members and guests and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Mrs. Anne Dejoie-Lucas recorded the minutes. Roll was called, and quorum was established.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Mrs. Gahagan (Chair)
Representative Beryl Amedee
Dr. Jason Anderson
Ms. Leanne Broussard
Mr. Jared Dunahoe
Dr. Vickie Gentry (Vice Chair)
Mr. Kirby Hopkins
Ms. Denise Karamales
Dr. William "Bill" Luster
Ms. Tana Luther
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister
Ms. Meredith McGovern
Dr. Larry Tremblay
Dr. Art Williams
Dr. Steve Horton, LSMSA Executive Director (non-voting)

Members Absent:

Mr. Joseph "Jed" Cain
Mr. Preston Castille
Ms. Lisa DeJean
Senator Katrina Jackson
Ms. Marian "Suzy" Johnson
Mr. Patrick Jenkins
Mr. Jimmy D. Long Jr.
Senator Beth Mizell
Representative Charles Owen
Ms. Regina Pierce

Guests Present:

Attorney Ken Sills
Dr. John Allen, LSMSA Chief of Staff
Dr. Kristy Pope-Key, LSMSA Director of Academic Affairs
Ms. Emily Shumate, LSMSA Director of Enrollment Management & Institutional Research

Ms. Angela Couvillion, Registrar and Chief Articulation Officer
Ms. Ro Slutsky, Director of Student Support Services
Ms. Christie Price, Dean of Students
Ms. Randi Washington, Director of the Living Community
Ms. Rebekah Maricelli, Senior External Affairs Officer
Dr. Kyle Stephens, LSMSA Faculty / Humanities
Ms. Ali Landry, LSMSA Foundation Executive Director

AGENDA ITEM 1: APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 20, 2023, BOARD MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the March 20, 2023, minutes and requested any additions or corrections.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Anderson, seconded by Dr. Tremblay, and unanimously passed, the minutes of the March 20, 2023, meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF THE MAY 15, 2023, SPECIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Mrs. Gahagan requested the Board's review of the May 15, 2023, Special Committee Meeting minutes and requested any additions or corrections. That meeting was chaired by Dr. Gentry.

Upon motion duly made by Meredith McGovern, seconded by Dr. Anderson, and unanimously passed, the minutes of the May 15, 2023, Special Committee meeting stand approved as read/reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Gahagan reported that she had no requests for comment.

AGENDA ITEM 4: EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS SPECIAL COMMITTEE REVIEW REGARDING ANNUAL EVALUATION OF LSMSA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND DECISION TO RECOMMEND RENEWAL OF CONTRACT.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Jared Dunahoe to enter into Executive Session to discuss the Special Committee's review regarding the annual evaluation of LSMSA's Executive Director and the decision to recommend renewal of his contract; pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statutes Title 42 Section 17 (A)(2) and (4), seconded by Dr. Anderson, Mrs. Lucas commenced roll call vote:

Representative Beryl Amedee - yes
Dr. Jason Anderson - yes
Ms. Leanne Broussard - yes
Mr. Jared Dunahoe - yes
Mrs. Sharon Gahagan (Chair) - yes
Dr. Vickie Gentry (Vice Chair) - yes
Mr. Kirby Hopkins - yes
Ms. Denise Karamales - yes

Dr. William "Bill" Luster - yes
Ms. Tana Luther - yes
Dr. Kimberly Walker McAlister - yes
Ms. Meredith McGovern - yes
Dr. Larry Tremblay - yes
Dr. Art Williams - yes

By unanimous vote, the Board entered into Executive Session at 1:10 p.m. to discuss the Special Committee's review regarding the annual evaluation of LSMASA's Executive Director and the decision to recommend renewal of his contract.

Mrs. Gahagan requested that the following guest(s) remain in session: Attorney Ken Sills. All other guests were instructed to leave the room. All recording devices and cameras were instructed to be turned off.

The Board reconvened from Executive Session at 1:45 p.m., with the following item to be reported: Special Committee decision regarding the annual evaluation of LSMASA's Executive Director and the decision to recommend renewal of his contract. Having re-established Quorum, Mrs. Gahagan proceeded with the meeting and asked the Committee Chair to report on its findings.

Dr. Gentry reported that based upon review of data from the survey that was conducted, the members of the Special Committee move that Dr. Steve Horton be given a satisfactory job rating and renewal of his contract for the next three (3) years.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Gentry; seconded by Dr. Williams and unanimously passed, the Board approved the satisfactory job rating and renewal of Dr. Horton's contract for the next three (3) years.

AGENDA ITEM 5: RATIFICATION OF FOUNDATION FACULTY/STAFF REIMBURSEMENTS SINCE MARCH 2023 BOARD MEETING

Six (6) faculty and staff members have submitted the appropriate paperwork and have received reimbursements for expenses by LSMASA's Foundation: David Andersen (Math Dept.), Dr. Maggie Hodge (Science Dept.), Dr. Steve Horton (Exec. Director), Chris King (Art Dept.), Rebekah Maricelli (Sr. External Affairs Officer), and Karn Richoux (Art Dept.). The agenda exhibit explains the expenditures and details for each. As per Foundation policy, these reimbursements must be approved quarterly by LSMASA's Board of Directors.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dunahoe, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the Board ratified the Foundation payments to faculty/staff made since the March 2023 meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 6: APPROVAL OF CREDENTIALS OF NEW FACULTY

Gregory Wascoe, currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Mobile, received his Master of Music from the University of North Texas. Specialties include Opera, Vocal Performance, and Musical Theatre. He will step into the line being vacated by the retirement of Lisa Benner in September.

Dr. Telba Espinoza-Contreras received her PhD in Comparative Literature as well as her Master of Arts in Hispanic Studies from the Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge. She also received a Master of Arts in Social Anthropology from the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología. Social Specialties (in addition to Spanish Language coursework) include Latin American Literature and Latin American Cultural Anthropology. She will step into the line being vacated by the retirement of Dr. Maria Sanchez.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Gentry, seconded by Rep. Amedee, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the credentials of new faculty.

AGENDA ITEM 7: APPROVAL OF NEW COURSES OFFERED

Two new courses were proposed for the 2023-24 academic year. They are Financial Literacy (one semester; 0.5 unit of credit) and Advanced Rowing (one semester; 0.5 unit of credit).

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dunahoe, seconded by Dr. McAlister, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the new courses offered for the 2023-24 academic year.

AGENDA ITEM 8: APPROVAL OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO STUDENT HANDBOOK

Attorney Sills explained the proposed amendments legally related to changes and updates at the state level regarding inclusions for Section 504; Release of Records of Deceased Students; Policy for the use of Narcan; and Pregnant and Parenting Students. Additional amendments are related to topics already included in the Handbook like K-9 assisted drug search, attendance policy adjustments, and more.

Questions were addressed by Dr. Key and Atty. Sills regarding the updates of assignments following absence, the use of pronouns, and compliance.

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Dunahoe, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the proposed amendments to the Student Handbook.

AGENDA ITEM 9: UPDATE ON REVISIONS OF TIMELINE FOR NEW EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Dr. Allen updated the Board on the progress of the new Employee Handbook, which will be ready for final approval shortly, following final review by Counsel, formatting and editing, and pagination. The new Handbook consolidates several individual policies into one user-friendly concise document that will be used going forward and amended with Board approval when necessary. State policies have been considered for inclusion, while larger policies like Title IX and ADA will be retracted from the Handbook and handled as separate policies to make them easier to manage.

No action required.

AGENDA ITEM 10: APPROVAL OF (REVISED) STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES FOR 2023-2024 AY

Dr. Allen asked in March that the Board approve the fees as they were. Going into the spring semester, required changes to fees became more apparent. Ms. Washington and Ms. Regina Brossett took on the

task of managing the budget and focusing on seeing where changes were needed. The rising costs of “everything” requires increasing these fees in areas like programming, publications, and yearbook. The Student Activity Fee is not a required fee, and the increase is nominal.

Ms. Washington clarified that the overall fee increase is \$30, from \$270 to \$300 -- \$5 for student life programming, \$5 towards laundry, and \$20 towards publications that include newspaper, Folio and yearbook.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dunahoe, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the Board approved the revised Student Activity Fees for 2023-2024 academic year.

AGENDA ITEM 11: REVIEW OF LSMSA’S 2023-2024 OPERATING BUDGET AS APPROVED BY THE LEGISLATURE (HB1)

A snippet of HB1 is included on page 4 of Dr. Allen’s Division report. There’s a significant reduction in budget for next year tied to acquisitions and major repairs. Most of what was awarded has been used to upgrade technology and make it consistent between classrooms. That line item was reduced because it was one-time funding. The other line item was \$410k for major repairs, which has been used around various parts of campus for things like sewer lines and bathroom repairs/renovations. Collectively, this amounts to about \$940k of one-time money not awarded for next year.

The budget for next year is a standstill budget. The other line-item reduction comes within inter-agency transfers. This line item allows for the “authority” for purchases through ESSER that will be reimbursed. MFP will decrease based on initial enrollment but will hopefully increase with the October counts.

Special thanks to Ms. Denise Karamales for her assistance in negotiating the use of ESSER funds.

The Education Excellence Fund (EEF) has increased just slightly based on the economic forecast from the State.

The Governor has yet to sign the budget, so there’s still some uncertainty about increases for faculty and support staff. Reduced costs in personnel will come from some of the retirements taking place this year; and the overall budget will basically be a standstill budget.

No action required.

AGENDA ITEM 12: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Dr. Horton alluded to the Division reports including lots of “ant bites” and things that happen throughout the day(s) of a regular school year.

The biggest accomplishment this year was the return to a pre-Covid graduation ceremony for the Class of 2023, which came through such trying times during their high school years. They received almost \$30 million in academic scholarships; the majority are remaining in Louisiana as they matriculate; and thanks to the hard work of Mrs. Couvillion, the School has signed an MOU with Louisiana State University (LSU). The articulation agreement is still being fine-tuned. It will benefit the class that just graduated, and preceding classes, to some degree, and allow many LSMSA students to enter LSU as juniors.

LSMSA is working with Northwestern State University's (NSU) Scholar's College and students will have the opportunity to take several of those courses as the schools work through that agreement to decide which credits will transfer upon graduation.

Enrollment Services is working to obtain the best qualified students in the State. What's most important is not only attracting these students, but being able to make sure they graduate as well. Support Services help to give students the best opportunity to complete their degree. LSMSA will not allow the admission of a student knowing that the student is not going to succeed. That's not fair to the student, the student body, or the faculty/staff, Horton said.

Regarding faculty searches, NSU has offered adjunct help and the faculty already here have assumed overloads. Some classes have been condensed without compromising admissions or the legislative acts that keep classroom sizes at certain levels. The entire curriculum, including electives, is being offered.

This is Dr. Key's last meeting as Director of Academic Affairs. She will assume a full faculty position in the Humanities/English Department. Dr. Jason Anderson assumes the interim Director role.

Board member Dr. Bill Luster has reached out to the Cane River Waterway Commission to try and secure a couple of boats for the crew team. That's just one of those "small" things that everybody is doing to keep the School progressing, and it's greatly appreciated.

Dr. Williams mentioned that he was pleased with this year's Commencement and felt the Louisiana School warmth and spirit at that ceremony, as compared to prior years during the pandemic.

No action required.

Before progressing to the next Agenda Item, Mrs. Gahagan took a moment to mention that Dr. McAlister is retiring from her position at NSU and ultimately the Board. Dr. Greg Handel will assume her position at NSU and on the Board until a replacement is hired.

AGENDA ITEM 13: REPORT FROM THE FACULTY

This being his last Board meeting as the Faculty Representative, Dr. Anderson expressed his pleasure at serving on the Board in such a capacity and introduced Dr. Kyle Stephens, who was chosen by the faculty as his successor. Dr. Stephens joins the Board effective July 1, 2023. Dr. Anderson then encouraged the members to refer to his written report of faculty accomplishments by Dr. Lindsay Zack (who earned her Master's Degree), Dr. Charlie Jones, Dr. Alison Landry, Dr. Morris Tichenor, and the Summer@ and EXCEL teams of faculty and staff.

Dr. Stephens joined LSMSA's History Department as a lecturer in 2015 after receiving his doctorate from the University of Tennessee. He was unanimously recommended by his peers to represent the faculty on LSMSA's Board of Directors.

Dr. Stephens said, "When I got here eight years ago, I thought I would like it here. I never knew how much I would love a place and never knew how dedicated I would find myself to an institution's mission. I love this school, and I'm looking forward to working with you and to learning from you." He then applauded Dr. Key for her prior guidance and Dr. Anderson for the task ahead as Director of Academic Affairs.

AGENDA ITEM 14: DIVISION REPORTS

a. CofS – Operations (Dr. Allen): The School is trying to get the funds to replace the computers in the Mac labs for the students in Visual Arts. Spending included new technology for the classrooms, new furniture, major repairs including sewer lines and installation of sprinkler systems in the Gym, and more. A complete recap of budget and expenditures is included in **Exhibit A14E1**.

b. Academic Affairs (Dr. Key): LSMSA held steady at a 90% retention rate this past year. The June report always provides an opportunity to grab some snapshots of the annual utilization of Dual Enrollment. This program has grown in the last five (5) years and offers tremendous student opportunity through LSMSA's commitment to this program, with 81% of the students utilizing dual enrollment. Being Dr. Key's last Board meeting as one of LSMSA's Senior Directors, she took a moment to thank the Members and share her appreciation for the way the Board supports the culture of LSMSA, the Charter and Mission of LSMSA, and for helping the faculty/staff create a space where the students can thrive, be welcomed, and be supported. Refer to **Exhibit A14E2**.

c. Enrollment Management and Institutional Research (E. Shumate): The numbers are slowly starting to move back in the right direction. Enrollment Services has been committed this year to seeking as many outreach opportunities as possible in middle and high schools throughout Louisiana for STEM events, community events, and more. Summer programs, Exploration Days, Campus Tours continue to be successful in teaching prospective students and families about LSMSA; and the School continues to search for ways to try and increase male enrollment. Refer to **Exhibit A14E3**.

d. Student Support Services (R. Slutsky): Students are supported not only through Academic counseling but also through personal counseling, offered by full-time, part-time, and college student counselors. With the help of 2019 alumna Jada Boyd, the counselors offered 24 "Wellness on Wednesday" programs to the students. The success of the 2023 students is due in large part to the guidance of Katie Summerell and the College Counseling Center (CCC). One hundred seventy-seven (177) Leap 2025 exams were administered to 100 students this past spring. Five Advanced Placement exams also were offered. Mrs. Slutsky internally presented the "Above Beyond" Award in her department to Mrs. Bonnie Rutledge who works in the CCC for her dedication and willingness to always help her colleagues and peers. **Refer to Exhibit A14E4**.

e. Dean of Students (C. Price): Student conduct showed some improvement towards the end of spring semester. Some additional students were identified as needing 504 accommodations; with help from Ms. Jennifer Fountain, 71 tests were proctored during the last quarter of the spring semester. Title IX does have some upcoming changes, and the School Administration will stay on top of those changes to make sure LSMSA is adequately trained and prepared. **Refer to Exhibit A14E5**.

f. Living Community (R. Washington): The Student Activity Fees approved by the Board make a huge difference in the experiences that LSMSA can offer its students outside of the classroom. Open Resident Advisor positions will be filled this summer, along with candidates for a Student Life Coordinator and a Student Life Advisor. Both of those will be housed on B-Tower and will be introduced to the Board in September. The LLC had over 219 hall programs this past year as well as 65 weekend programs. Meridith Madison and the Student Life Advisors host those programs throughout the year and do a great job with the students. Health Services and the relationship

with NRMC continues to thrive. LSMSA also will team with sources to offer an adolescent pre-diabetes awareness program. Over 50 student organizations participated in more than 40 fundraising events. The students are active and involved and look forward to these opportunities each semester.

Representative Amedee inquired whether LSMSA offers active shooter drills along with its regular fire and other standard drills. Ms. Washington explained that NPSO provided an officer to work with the faculty/staff as well as the dining staff to walk through and critique various areas and how to react/respond in case of an active shooter. Res-Life staff members then took that information and shared it back with the residents on their halls. **Refer to Exhibit A14E6.**

g. Foundation (A. Landry): The Capital Campaign is progressing well and is currently in its Silent Phase. **Refer to Exhibit A14E7.**


AGENDA ITEM 15: OTHER BUSINESS

The next Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 11, 2023.

There being no further business;

Upon motion duly made by Dr. Tremblay, seconded by Dr. Williams, and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Sharon T. Gahagan, Ed.S.
Chair



Steven G. Horton, PhD.
Secretary